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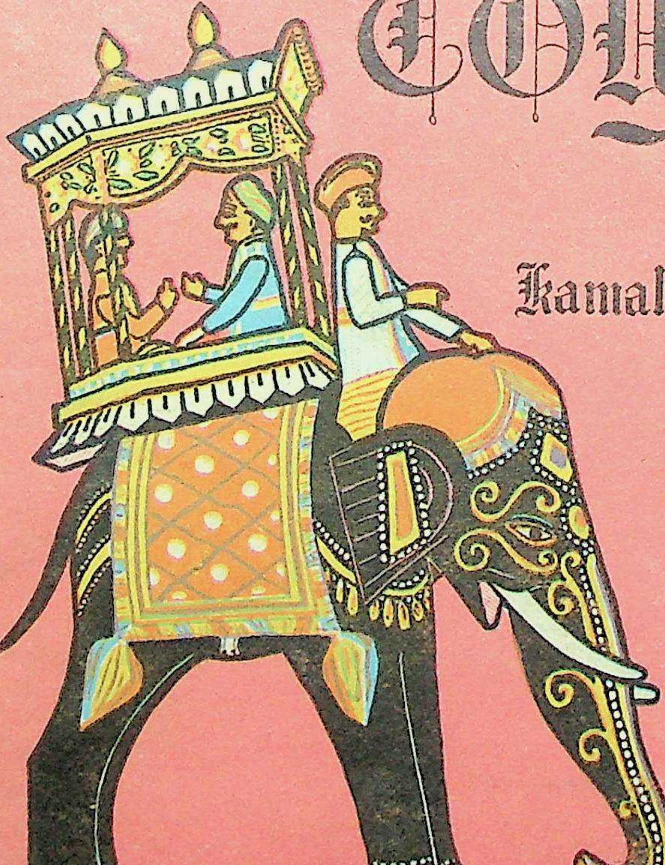
A Journey Through TOYLAND

By
Kamala S. Dongerkery



Illustrations
Mrs. SCHWARZ

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A JOURNEY THROUGH TOYLAND

Kamala S. Dongerkery

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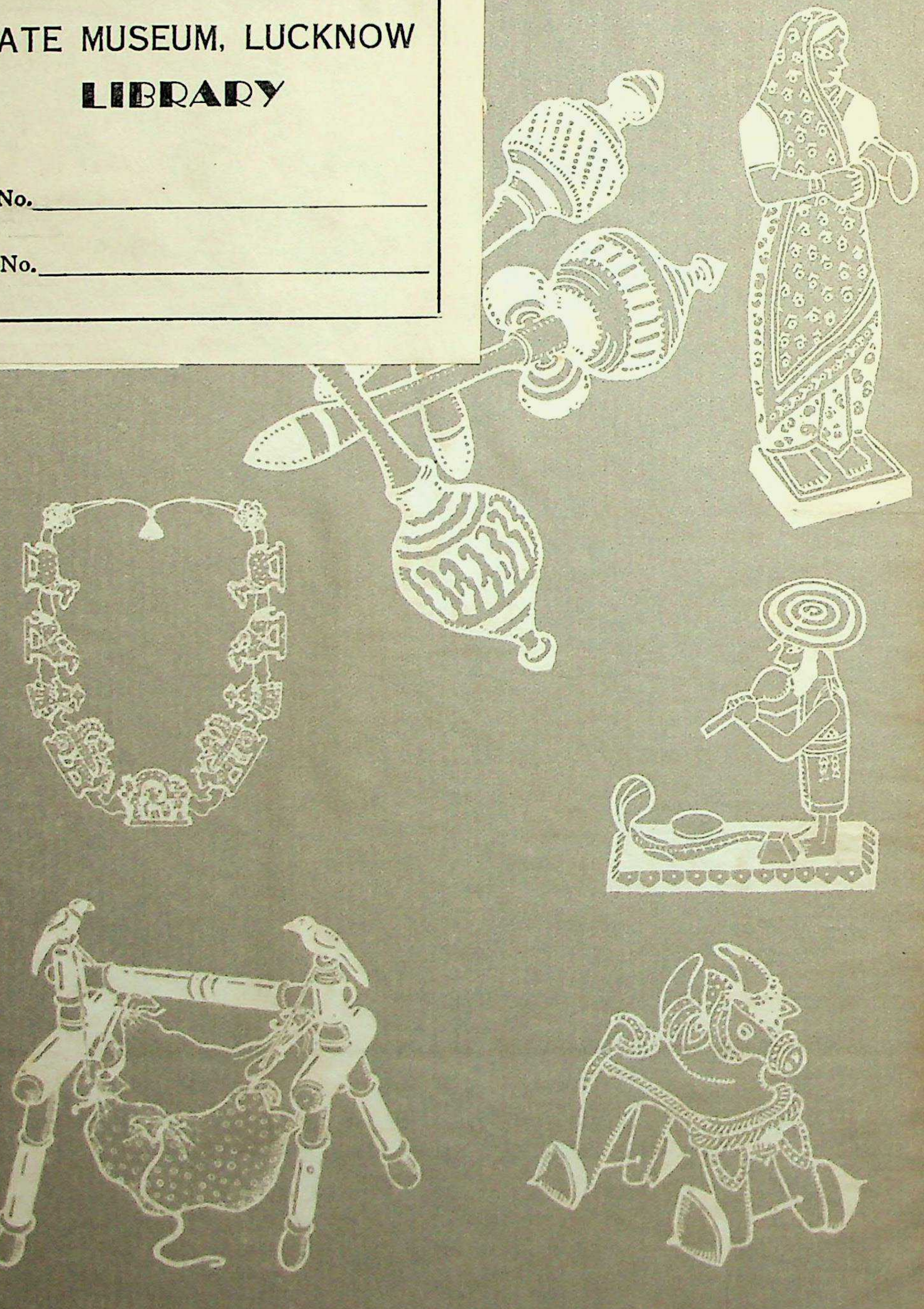

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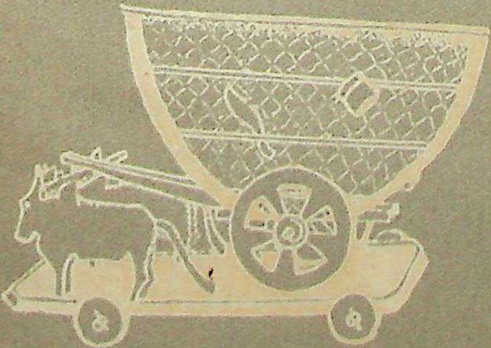

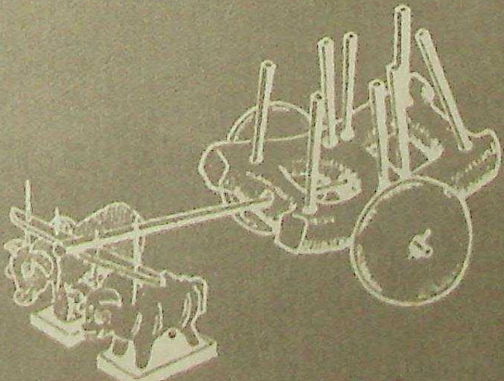

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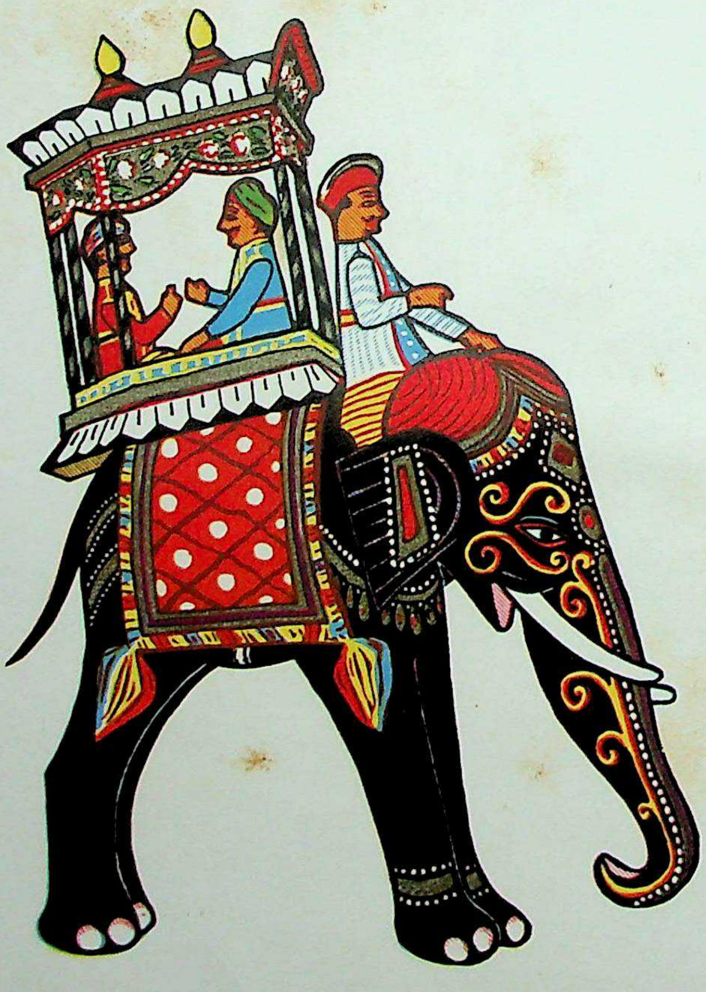

ELEPHANT WITH HOWDAH
Kondapalli, Vijayawada

A JOURNEY THROUGH TOYLAND

By

KAMALA S. DONGERKERY

Illustrated by

Mrs. A. B. SCHWARZ

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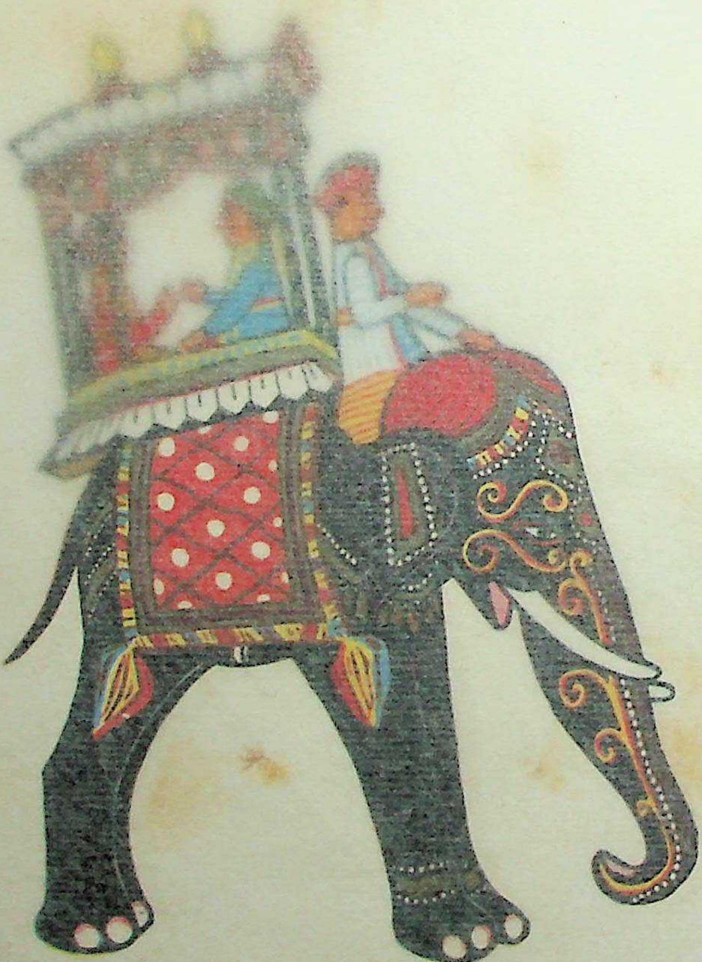

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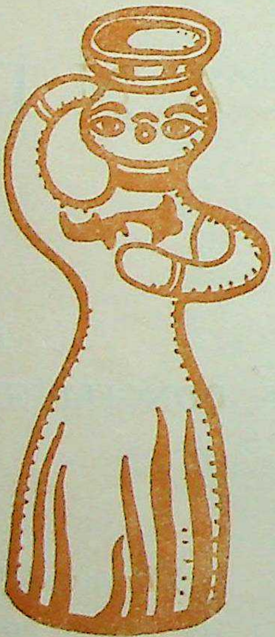

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TO

MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER
SHIVARAO N. ARUR
(1860-1944),
A leading lawyer of Dharwar,

In affectionate remembrance
of the happy days of my childhood
under his loving care

in
DHARWAR

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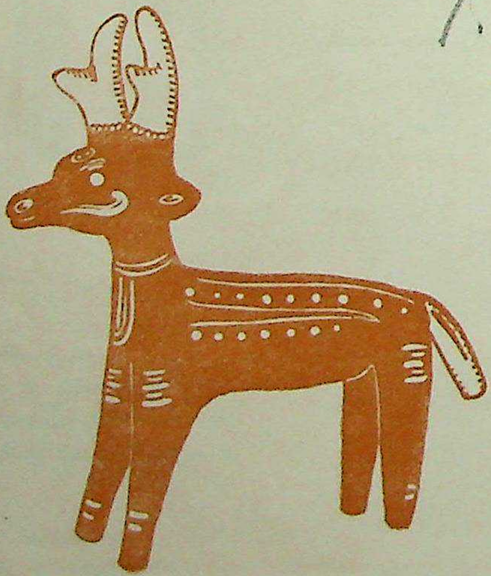


FOREWORD

I have glanced through A JOURNEY THROUGH TOYLAND which Mrs. Kamala S. Dongerkery has written with such care and affection. Toyland knows neither geographical nor political limits. Children have a spontaneous sympathy with one another and until they are seduced by indoctrination which we sometimes call education, they do not realise the differences which are magnified by adults. Group loyalties are what are called in philosophy factions and our primary loyalty is to the human race as a whole. If the generous feelings of children are fostered in the right direction, they will find it easy to feel as citizens of the world rather than as citizens of this or that community. To this great idea Mrs. Kamala S. Dongerkery's book of A JOURNEY THROUGH TOYLAND is a valuable contribution.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Vice-President's Lodge,
2 King Edward Road,
New Delhi,
30th April, 1953.

PREFACE

Toys are not trifles. They are important to the child whose heart is set on them. They are no less important to the student of civilization who attempts with their help to reconstruct the story of the buried past of the human race, since they are intimately connected with the activities of the children who played with them and of the adults who designed or made them. The toys recovered from the excavation of ancient tombs or sites which were the seats of by-gone civilizations and those that have left traces of their existence in old sculptures, literary and historical records supply valuable supplementary landmarks in the history of man's progress.

A journey through toyland is both fascinating and rewarding, for that territory knows neither geographical nor political limits. It encircles the globe and runs through almost endless corridors of time. As a folk art, toy-making takes us back to the dim and distant past. Though the factory-produced toy is a product of our mechanical civilization, some of the earliest toys prove that mechanical devices were known to our ancestors thousands of years ago.

The educational value of toys is an interesting topic well worth study by the expert in education and psychology. The relevant chapter of this book presents the lay point of view. Since we are concerned here mainly with Indian handmade toys, the educational importance of toys is discussed in relation to the Indian child and the Indian mother. The social significance of toys is another interesting aspect of the subject, which throws light on the remarkable similarity of sentiments and customs that exists among people divided from one another by time, space, race or religion.

Two points emerging from this study may be mentioned here. One is that, in selecting toys for their children, mothers have been instinctively guided by educational principles. The "Nuremberg kitchens" which instilled "housewifely zeal into little German girls" in the 16th and 17th centuries and the little coloured toys that are hung above the cradle in the Indian home are illustrations. The other is that, while handmade toys reflect the culture and traditions of a people, those produced by factories represent the march of science.

The last chapter of this small book deals with the potential value of toys as aids to international understanding. It is well known that dolls which were exported from one country to another have been messengers of goodwill in the past. When all minds are directed to the all-important problem of achieving a lasting peace and freedom from the fear of war, it is worth considering whether the apparently insignificant toy which puts the innocent child at ease with his surroundings cannot be made use of as an instrument of education which will transform him into the peace-loving citizen of tomorrow to whom the idea of war will be abhorrent .

If this book serves to awaken the interest of adults in the study of the playthings of children and to open up to view the possibilities of transforming these playthings into bonds of goodwill and friendliness among children, in whose hands will lie the future of the world, the author will have reason to feel that her labour has not been in vain.

It may be stated here that this book has been written with special reference to Indian toys, their varieties, their cultural, historical and educational significance. In the course of this study it was found necessary to refer to toys in general, to their origin and to their development from the earliest times in other parts of the world in order to complete the background of the picture, and also for purposes of comparison. There is no denying the fact that man from the earliest times, all over the world, has been moved by much the same emotions and inspired by ideas and ideals which have a great deal in common. It could very well be said that the toy which we are apt to regard as a mere plaything for the child's amusement affords one more proof of the essential unity of human nature.

K. S. D.

Sital Mahal,
64, Walkeshwar Road,
Bombay, 6.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To give thanks where thanks are due is not only a duty but a pleasure. The problem is how to begin and with whom.

I think I could do no better than begin by expressing my gratitude to the public for the kind reception they gave to my book on Indian Embroidery, which encouraged me to embark upon this my second venture. A timely suggestion from Dr. Moti Chandra, Curator of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, that I might think of another subject connected with art and culture set me thinking, and the subject of the present study occurred to me. My thanks are due to him for the help and guidance he readily gave me, whenever I needed it, in gathering the material for this book from museum exhibits and literature dealing with archaeological excavations and ancient civilizations. Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. P. V. Kane, the well-known Sanskritist, Dr. H. D. Sankhalia of the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Poona, and Professor Miss P. V. Kaikini of Sophia College, Bombay, have placed me under a debt of gratitude by their valuable assistance in hunting up references to toys in ancient Hindu and Buddhist texts. Miss S. Panandikar, Principal of the Secondary Trainnig College, Bombay, was kind enough to read the manuscript and make useful suggestions with regard to those portions of the book which deal with the educational value of toys, for which I am beholden to her. Mrs. Schwarz's collaboration by placing at my disposal the collection of her paintings of Indian toys, *which has largely furnished the illustrations included in this book, has lightened my task and enhanced the value of the presentation of the subject. I would fail in my duty if I did not acknowledge the help Mr. D. N. Marshall, Librarian of the University of Bombay, gave me by supplying me with the latest literature dealing with toys. I think it only fair to acknowledge the constant encouragement and help I received from a source very near to me, which I am not at liberty to mention more specifically.*

I am indebted to the Director of Archaeology, New Delhi, the Trustees of the Prince of Wales Museum and the Secretariat Record Office, Bombay, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Archaeological and Ethnological Museum, Cambridge, and the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, for the courtesy and facilities extended by them to me in connection with the writing of this book and especially in providing material for some of the illustrations.

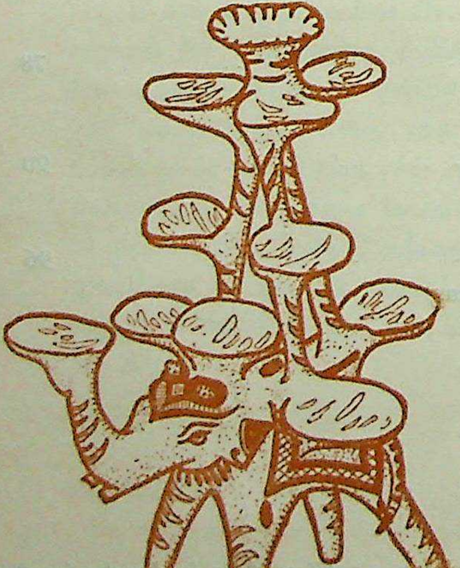
When I approached Dr. S. Radhakrishnan with a request for a foreword, I did so with great diffidence. I was happy when he readily acceded to my request. I am, nevertheless, only too conscious of my shortcomings to think that this humble work deserves the honour of carrying a foreword from one so eminent in philosophy, letters, education and public life. My gratitude to him is, therefore, all the greater. My regret is that I do not find words adequate to express its depth.

K. S. D.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	TOYS .. .. Their Origin & Significance	1
II	THE TOY .. .. Through The Ages	12
III	TOYS .. .. From Excavated Sites	24
IV	SOURCES .. .. Literary And Sculptural	37
V	INDIAN TOYS .. .. Their Cultural Importance	44
VI	INDIAN TOYS .. .. Their Educational Value	55
VII	TOYS .. .. In The Indian Market	68
VIII	FESTIVALS .. .. And Sentiments	78
IX	PUPPETS	90
X	AIDS .. .. To International Understanding	96

Note : In line 7 on p. 38 for "*kridanaka* (cock) as a toy" read "a *kridanaka* (toy)"



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Title	Materials	Colours	Page
1	Farm-Cart, Indus Valley Civilization .. (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra-cotta	pink ..	1
2	Animals, Mohenjo-Daro .. (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra cotta	„ ..	2
3	Bal-Krishna, Mysore ..	wood	yellow, red & black	5
4	Saint Mirabai, Banaras ..	„	red, green and gold	7
5a	Folk toys, Assam ..	terra-cotta	pink, dark blue & red	9
5b	„ „ Bengal ..	„ „	pink, red, black and silver ..	9
6	Snake-Charmer, Vijayawada ..	wood	white, blue, brown, red and yellow ..	10
7a	Nodding bull, Harappa .. (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra-cotta	pink	12
7b	Nodding bull, Mohenjo-Daro (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra cotta	„ ..	13
8	Pig, Mohenjo-Daro .. (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra cotta	„ ..	13
8a	Paddle doll, Egypt .. (courtesy : British Museum, London)	wood	yellow and black ..	14
9	Cat, Ancient Egypt .. (courtesy : British Museum, London)	terra-cotta	pink ..	15
10	Rider, Greek toy (courtesy : Dept. of Antiquities, Govt. of Cyprus)	„	black and Indian red ..	15
11	Greek Clay Chariot (courtesy : Dept. of Antiquities, Govt. of Cyprus)	terra cotta	black and Indian red	16
12	English doll, early Victorian period .. (courtesy : Victoria & Albert Museum, London)	cloth & porcelain	pink, white and blue	20
13	Bronze Elephant, Andhra Satavahana Kolhapur, Bombay State .. (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	bronze	..	24
13a	Figurine .. (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra-cotta	grey ..	25
13b	Toy Ganesha ..	wood	yellow, pink and green ..	26

Figure	Title	Materials	Colours	Page
13c	Clay-Cart, Greece (courtesy : Dept. of Antiquities, Govt. of Cyprus)	terra-cotta	Indian red and brown	27
14	Wheeled bird, rattle, whistle, etc., Mohenjo-Daro (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra cotta	pink	29
15	Utensils Mohenjo-Daro	terra cotta	”	30
16	” ” ” (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	” ”	”	31
16a	Aswapala (horse and rider) Ahichchatra Uttar Pradesh (courtesy : Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of India)	terra cotta	”	33
17	Bronze rattle, Andhra Culture, Chandravalli Mysore State (courtesy : Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of India)	bronze		34
17a	Terra-cotta figurine, Nagarjunakonda, Andhra State (courtesy : Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of India)	terra-cotta	pink	35
18	Sculpture, Andhra State (courtesy : Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of India)	from stone pillar		37
19	Rahula's toys, Sculpture Amaravati (courtesy : British Museum, London)	from stone roundel	white	39
20	Sculpture, Nagarjunakonda	stone panels		40
20a	” ” (courtesy : Dept. of Archaeology, Govt. of India)	”		41
21	Thakki dolls	wood	red yellow, green and brown	44
22	Wooden doll, Bengal	”	green, yellow, black red and blue	45
23	Thakki doll	”	multicoloured	46
24	Liveried Telanga		red blue and yellow	47
25	Gopi (Milkmaid)		green, red, blue and gold	48
26	Five of the Dashavatars	”	multicoloured	49
27	Anointing of the Bride Rajasthan	”	blue, green, red and black	50
28	Kalighat toys, Bengal	clay	black, yellow and red	51

Figure	Title	Materials	Colours	Page
29	Owls, Bengal	wood	yellow, red and black	52
30	Gangavati, Rajasthan	wood	blue, green, red and black	53
31	Bull, Nasik	clay	blue, green and yellow	55
32	Horse, Rajasthan	cloth	black, white, yellow and red	59
33	Camel, Madras State	wood	cream, black and majenta	60
34	Basava (Bull) Karnatak, Bombay State	wood	brown	61
35	Utensils, Channapatna (Madras)	wood	pink, yellow, green and blue	63
36	Hanuman, Banaras	,,	red, blue and yellow	64
37	Horse and Rider, Indore	clay	white, yellow, red, green and blue	65
38	Sinhachala horse, Vishakhapatna, & Elephant, Madras	red wood and yellow wood		68
39	Horse, Banaras	wood	white, red, blue and black	69
40	Papier-mache' horse, Orissa	paper pulp	blue, white, red and yellow	70
41	,, elephant ,,	,, ,,	white, yellow, red, black and green	71
42	Calcutta and Birbhum toys	terra-cotta	pink and grey	72
43	Alhadi, Bengal	clay	white, yellow, pink and black	73
44	Fat woman, Mohenjo-Daro (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra-cotta	pink	74
45	Cart, South India	wood & palm leaf	beige	75
46	Papier-mache' tumblers, Rajasthan	paper pulp & clay	white, yellow, pink, red, black and blue	76
47	Soapstone toys, Madhya Bharat	soapstone	white and pink	77
48	Box, Rajasthan	wood	multicoloured	78

Figure	Titles	Materials	Colours	Page
49	Diwali lights	clay	yellow, blue, red and green	79
50	Toy cradle, Saurashtra	wood	red, green and yellow	81
51	Mask	paper pulp	black, red, yellow and blue	82
52	Toy mask, Mohenjo-Daro (courtesy : Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay)	terra-cotta	pink	82
53	Haritalika	sandal-wood	light brown	83
54	Kite	paper, bamboo	blue, black, white and yellow	84
55	Paper lantern	paper, bamboo	blue, yellow and pink	85
56	Holi Sugar garland	sugar, string	yellow, pink and white	86
57	Musical Instrument	tin, paper, wood, string	white, red, pink and yellow	87
58	Drum	wood, tin, paper, string	green, brown, white black and red	88
59	Puppet, Rajasthan	cloth	yellow, red and green	90
60	Cow and Calf, Banaras	wood	white, red, yellow, black and green	96
61	Mayurpankhi or Peacock boat	wood, paper	blue, green, black, red and yellow	98
62	Matsya Avatar	wood	white, brown, black, red and yellow	100
63	Garuda	wood	white, black, red and yellow	101
64	Elephant, Orissa	wood	yellow, black, white and red	103

PLATES

Plate	Title	Material	Colours	Facing page
Frontispiece	Elephant with howdah ..	wood	as illustrated	
I	Orissa Plaque ..	wood	white, black, red, blue, yellow and green	8
II	Rajasthan Dolls ..	cloth, papier-machè	white, yellow, red and green	46
III	Indian Rattles ..	wood	yellow, purple, green pink and red	57
IV	Saurashtra Elephant ..	wood	dark-blue, red, yellow and orange	62
V	Wooden Dolls, South India .	wood (red & yellow)	dark red and light yellow	71
VI	Dancers, Manipur ..	wood	black, white, red, green and yellow	75
VII	Diwali Elephant ..	clay	yellow, red and black	84
VIII	Puppets ..	cloth	multicoloured	92

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Kamala S. Dongerkery

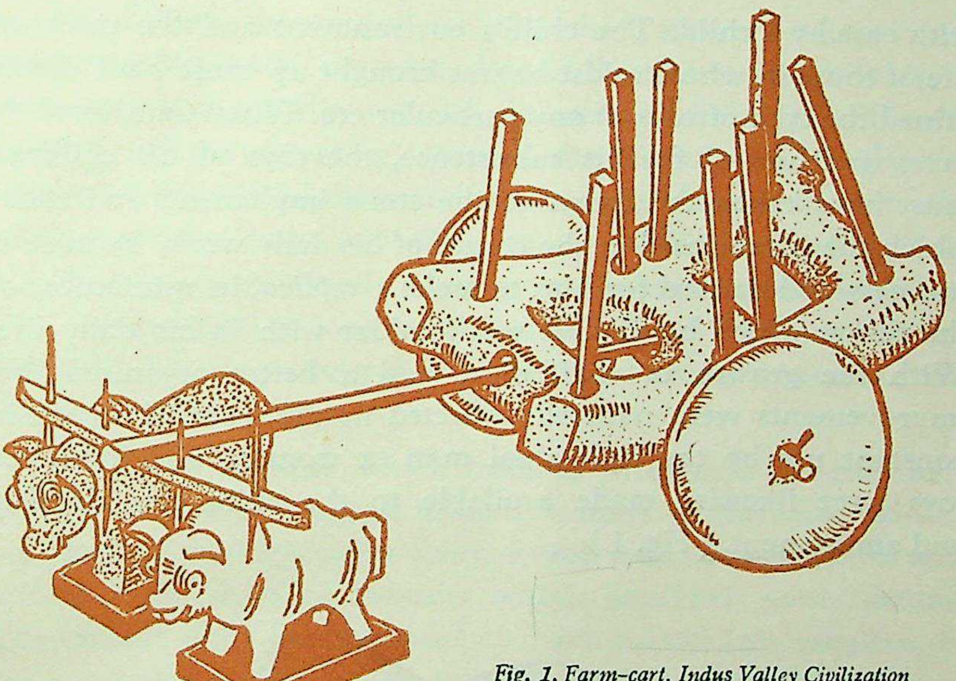


Fig. 1, Farm-cart, Indus Valley Civilization
c. 3500-2750 B. C.

CHAPTER I

TOYS

Their Origin & Significance

TOYS must have been in existence long before the dawn of civilization. It is difficult to think of a time when they were altogether unknown. The play instinct is inherent in children and the earliest toys presumably included any object which appealed to this instinct and could be handled with ease by a child. The child's environment and the mode of life of those in whose midst he was brought up must have determined the type of toys of any particular era. When man lived in caves and hunted for his subsistence, the toys of his children must have taken the forms of the stone implements and sticks which the parent used in the course of his daily work, because it was easy and natural for him to make a *replica,* in miniature, of the things which he himself was familiar with in his daily life. With the growth of civilization, and a better organized life, improvements were naturally effected in the material objects in constant use by the individual man or woman, and improved toys were likewise made available to the child for his play and amusement. (Fig. 1)

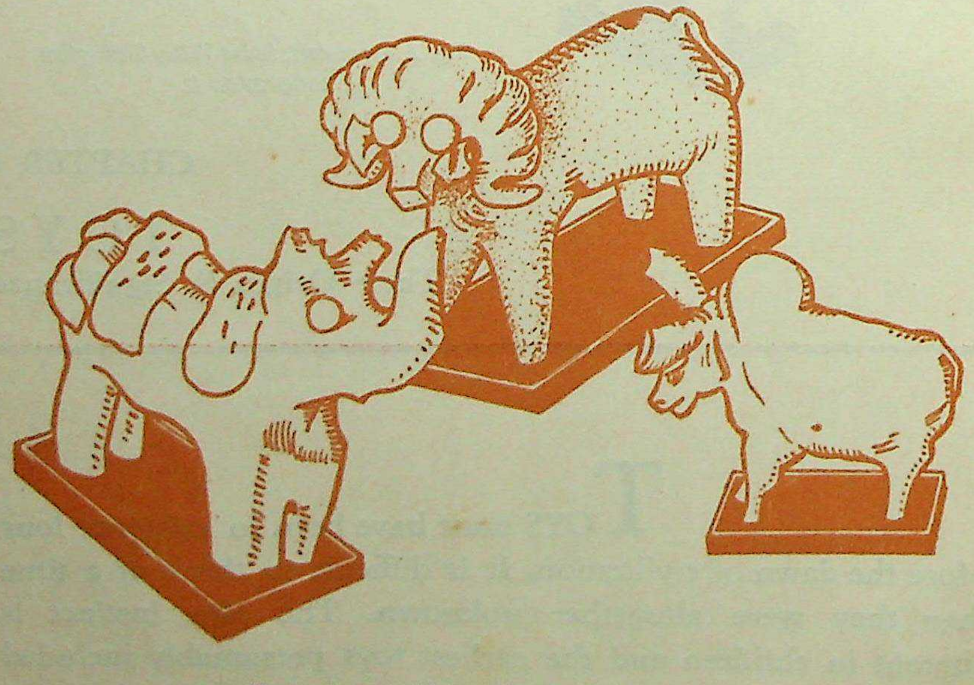


Fig. 2, Animals, Mohenjo-Daro c. 3500-2750 B. C.

A peep into the toys of the past, which are met with among archaeological finds, or referred to in literature and history, is revealing, because the toys of different periods and different peoples tell a fascinating story of the life of the people, the ideas that dominated them and the traditions and culture of the society of the time. According to a well-known writer, " the history of toys may easily develop into a philosophy of motives and develop into a long controversy." Toys are not only an index to human activity but reflect the strong under-currents in the structure of society.

Primitive societies which believed in objects bringing luck to their owners with regard to such matters as increased rainfall and bounteous crops, goats giving better milk or victory in war, looked upon dolls as mascots which attracted good fortune. The earliest dolls are supposed to have served this purpose. In the same societies there were individuals who would make use of these very dolls to frighten other people, and there were yet others who sincerely believed that certain dolls could cure all the ailments that the flesh is heir to. Those were times when superstition was rampant, and people generally believed in the existence of spirits, and their mighty power for both good and evil.

The toys of a later period indicate a peaceful life such as that associated with the Indus Valley Civilization. The toys belonging to this era reflect a tranquil agricultural life with its domestic and other animals. (Fig. 2) Rattles, whistles and balls are to be found among them. The Egyptian antiquities, unearthed from the tombs of mummies, have brought to light scores of miniatures which were the constant companions of the dead. They throw light upon the civilization of Egypt. When religious wars became the order of the day, as in the Middle Ages of Europe, toy soldiers and banners seem to have caught the imagination of young folk. Later, during the French Revolution, toy guillotines were included among the playthings of the child, showing with a painful realism how the cruelty and wickedness of man project their lugubrious picture into the innocent amusements of the child.

The period of armed peace in Europe between 1870 and 1914 discloses that the toys which children of that era played with were mostly mechanized *replicas* of the symbols of military strength. During the first world war models of implements and concomitants of war, such as cannon, tanks, wagons, trucks and Red-Cross vans found their way into the toy market. The second world war has left in its wake not only more cannon and tanks, but to these have been added more specialized toys like armoured cars, submarines, battleships and bombers. Even the atom bomb has made its appearance in the shape of the thunderbolt cracker, much to the annoyance of citizens who love peace and quiet. With the swing from a peaceful and quiet life to a hectic period of constant fear and worry of war, one notices the transformation of the toy from a creative and artistic handmade thing into a mechanical, factory-produced article, devoid of any cultural or traditional significance.

To different countries goes the palm for the origin of distinctive toys, though some of them have later deviated from the original idea or discontinued producing particular kinds of toys for one reason or another. Inventions in the field of toy-making or new kinds of toys are of great historical interest. They indicate in some measure trends in social progress and achievements. The origin of the toy balloon is traceable to

China, although the balloon became a popular toy in several other countries much later. England has to her credit the toy theatre through which characters in English literature were brought close to English children. To France goes the credit for introducing costume dolls as messengers of goodwill and friendship and representatives of fashion. Germany introduced into the world mechanical toys which were more or less *replicas* of the mechanical toys of the scientific age. Dolls' houses, complete in the minutest detail, are among the well-known toys of Holland, while dolls known as 'Flanders' babies', are believed to have been imported from Holland in large numbers by other countries. Switzerland is known for the invention of

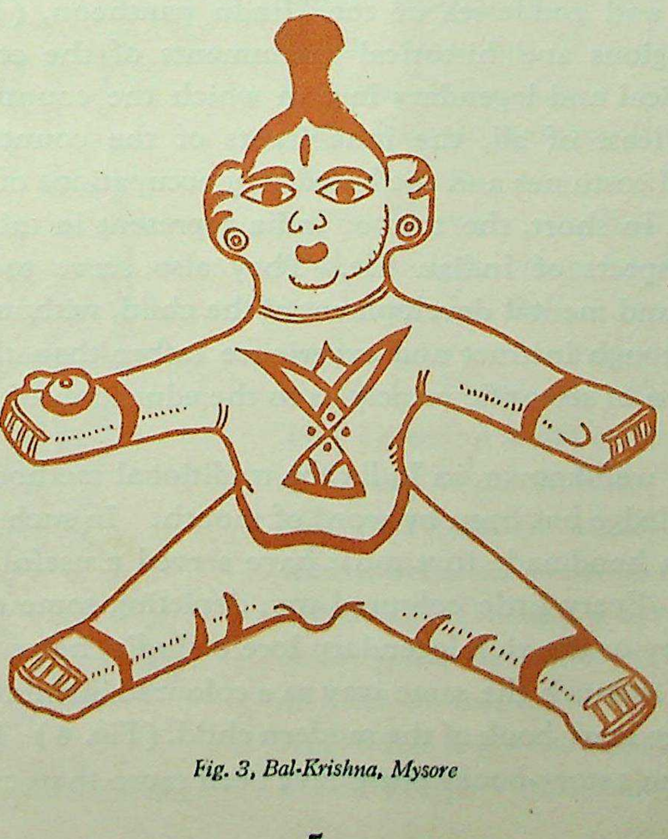


Fig. 3, Bal-Krishna, Mysore

toys such as music-boxes and *chalets* which are operated by clock-work.

It is a curious phenomenon that in India, by the side of the ultra-modern toy, there exists the traditional indigenous handmade toy, with a history of its own. The vastness of the country, the economic inequalities of her people and the love of tradition inherent in them have been responsible for some of the traditional things continuing from generation to generation in India. The people have imbibed from the Indian craftsman the spirit that has inspired him in fashioning and moulding the comparatively inexpensive toys made of clay or wood representing the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, (Fig. 3) the great religious and historical monuments of the country, the mythological and legendary lore in which the country abounds and, not least of all, the inhabitants of the country in their variegated costumes and the hereditary occupations of the village artizans. In short, the toys of India represent in miniature the various aspects of Indian life. They also serve to foster the aesthetic and mental development of the child, without conscious effort, through instinct and experience rather than through the application of scientific principles to the education of the child.

As is well-known, in India the traditional method of imparting knowledge has been by word of mouth. In such a system of education handmade toys must have served a useful purpose in the past. Every little coloured toy, depicting some character in the history or the rich legendary lore of India, helps to illustrate the story in much the same way as a coloured illustration does in the picture story-book of the modern child. (Fig. 4) The absence of children's story-books must have been more than compensated for in the past, as it is even at present, by the variety of instructive toys available to the poorest of the poor at a very low cost.

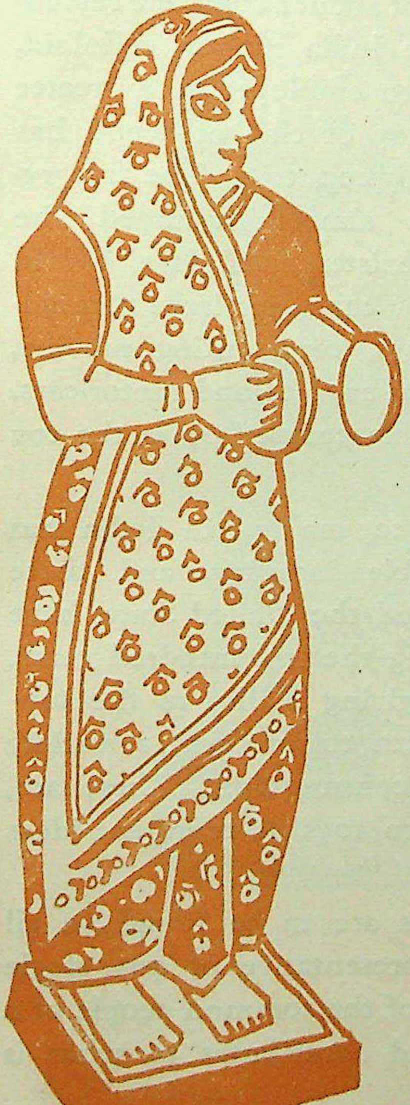


Fig. 4, Saint Mirabai, Banaras

It would appear that toys in all countries have developed on more or less parallel lines. In the early stages they were made of any raw material that was found suitable and came ready to hand. Rag dolls, with oats for the eyes and corn for the nose, were at one time made in Hungary, while Russia made use of pine cones, moss and fibre as material for its dolls. Chile and Brazil made their dolls from yarn wrapped around pieces of wire. Dolls in Bermuda were made of banana stalks, a nut being used for the head of the doll. The Eskimo used his own raw products of skins and walrus tusks to make his toys. The Peruvian dolls were all made of wood, while Mexico produced clay toys painted in colours, and sometimes used straw as well. The substance of which a toy is made, or its price in money, is a matter of little moment. What is important in the toy is the idea behind it, which exerts a powerful influence on the child, whose receptive and highly imaginative mind identifies the toy with his own existence.

The last hundred years have brought about a complete revolution in toy-making. New *media* like India rubber, celluloid, plaster of Paris and plastics have been employed to a greater and greater extent. The handmade toy of clay or wood has receded into the background in many countries. The factory-produced and mechanical toy has almost swamped the handmade and artistic toy out of existence. Before World War I, Germany used to send to other countries large consignments of mechanically propelled toys, representing moving, mechanical objects like trams, railway engines and motor-cars. Japan entered the field as a formidable competitor in the toy market after the end of that war.

There is no doubt that today toy-making in India has become an important and profitable industry, and three countries, namely, Germany, Japan and the United States have developed a large toy industry during the last hundred years. World War II was responsible for giving a fillip to the toy-making industry in India, who began to produce a variety of factory-made toys for her own consumption. These are, however, mostly imitations of foreign toys or represent ideas suggested by them.

Such factory-produced articles as are to be found in all the cities of the world are not representative of any single country. It is the artistic expression of the common people of a country that becomes traditional and contributes to what is known as folk art.

Folk art is not guided so much by measurements or calculations as by feeling, and may not therefore be realistic. Its

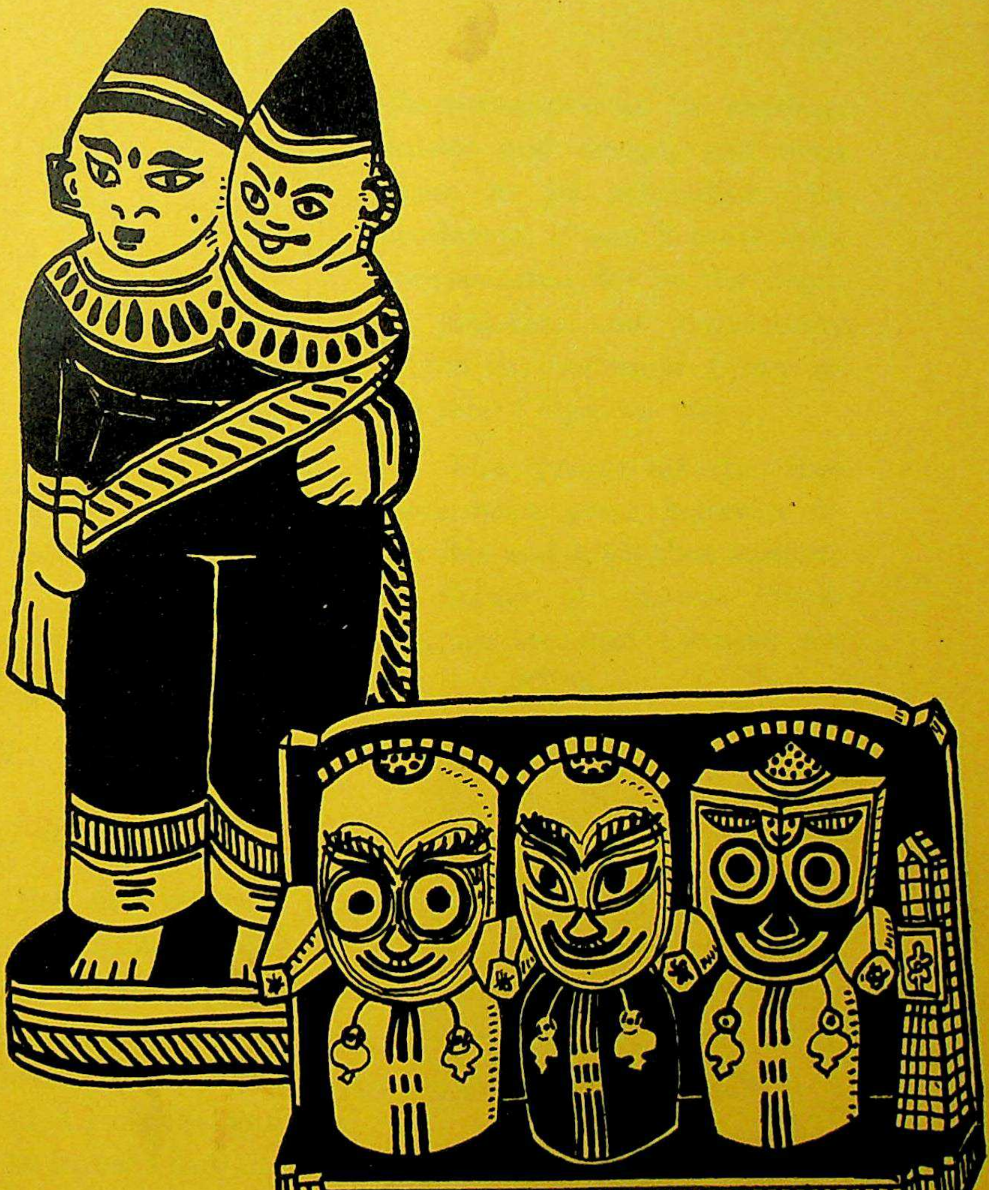


PLATE I
ORISSA PLAQUE

characteristics lie in rhythm, colour and design, and even more in its symbolism. Its crudeness, if any, is more than compensated for by the depth of emotion and spontaneity which the craftsman brings to his job. (Figs. 5a, 5b)

The people of the East have been great believers in the life and spirit that animate all things in nature. Hsieh Ho, an eminent Chinese art critic of the 6th century, emphasised rhythm and life as the fundamental principles of all arts. The people of the Orient are imbued with the idea that life and spirit can be infused into the most trivial of material objects, and this view has been handed down from generation to generation. A chunk of wood or a lump

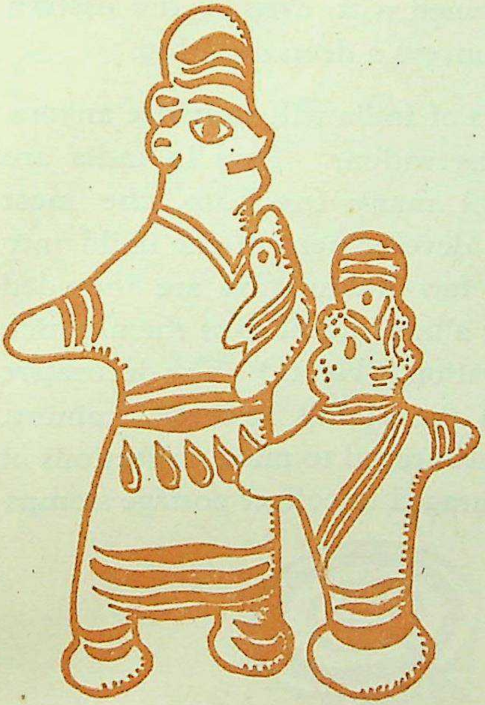


Fig. 5a, Folk toys, Assam

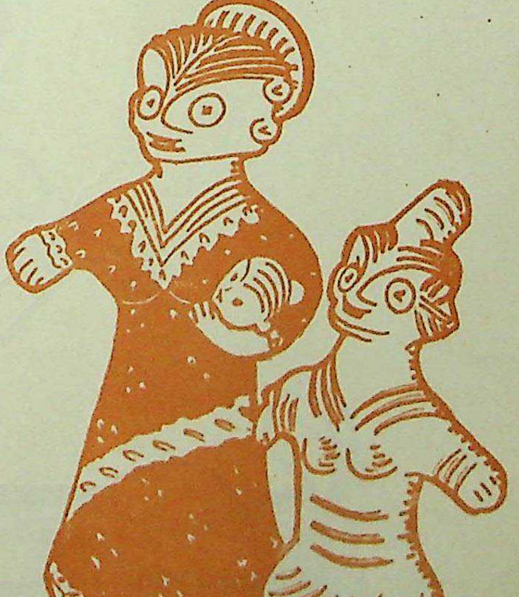


Fig. 5b, Folk toys, Bengal

of clay can, therefore, be transformed with ease by the eastern craftsman into an object which conveys a deep meaning.

A study of the handmade toys of India will convince anyone of the truth of the foregoing observations. Toys in India are not just playthings. They fulfil many functions, the most important of which is to help the development of the child into an integrated personality. Very few Indian toys are intended only for amusement, and there is a large number of them which are used for the purpose of decoration. (Fig. 6) The decorative toy plays an important part in the child's aesthetic training. Children should, therefore, be encouraged to make collections of such toys, even as they are encouraged to collect postage stamps

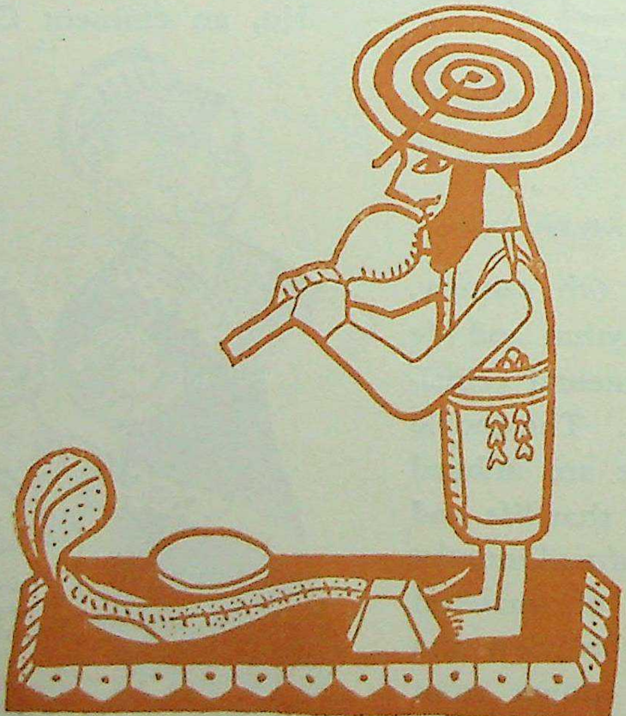


Fig. 6 Snake-Charmer, Vijayawada

pictures or curios. A collection of toys can become a valued possession for the child, because, apart from the joy that it brings him, it serves to contribute to his growing knowledge of his country and its inhabitants and the society in which he lives. Collections of toys are to be found among the possessions of most families in India. Since a separate chapter is devoted to the rôle that toys play in the life of the Indian child, here it is enough to state that, so far as the mental, emotional and spiritual development of the child is concerned, the Indian toy amply fulfils its purpose.

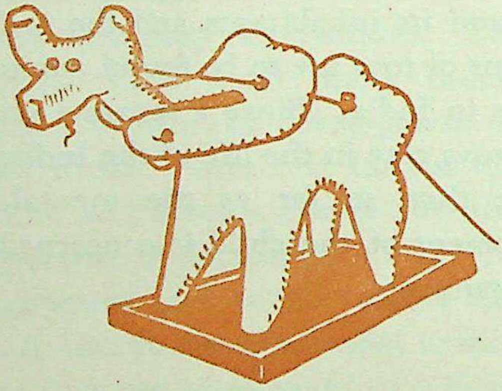


Fig. 7a, Nodding bull, Harappa, c. 3,000 B.C.

CHAPTER II

THE TOY
Through The Ages

EVERY civilization that has been through the process of growth and decay has had its distinctive toys, reflecting the culture of the era, the prevailing mode of life, habits and customs of the people, their thoughts, beliefs and aspirations. The earliest toys of which models or records exist

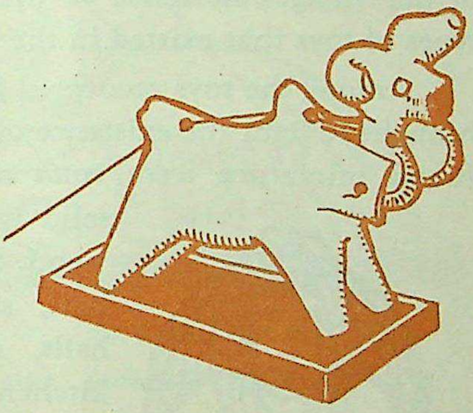


Fig. 7b, Nodding bull, Mohenjo-Daro, c. 3,000 B.C.

belong to the period of the Mohenjo-Daro: or Indus Valley Civilization, which archaeologists place between 3,500 and 2,750 B.C. The student of archaeology who embarks upon the study of this ancient civilization comes across numerous *terra cotta* toys, found at the Mohenjo-Daro site, which surprise him by their modernity. It is, indeed, strange that the forms of these toys and the subjects which they represent bear a striking resemblance to some of the present-day handmade toys to be found in the Indian villages. These toys present to the mind's eye the picture of a peaceful and contented agricultural life, although the civilization of Mohenjo-Daro is believed to have been urban rather than rural in character. The co-existence of these proofs of an agricultural mode of life with distinct and unmistakable traces of an advanced civilization, which has come to be associated with the name of Mohenjo-Daro, can, however, be explained by the fact that urban and rural life cannot be, or, at least, were not, in the past, divorced from each other. Even today we see in some

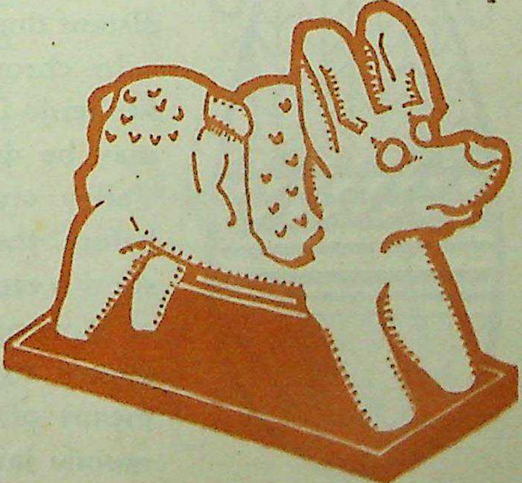


Fig. 8, Pig, Mohenjo-Daro

of our villages alongside of the latest mechanical toys the same types of toys that existed in the Mohenjo-Daro era. (Figs. 7a, 7b)

Among the toys recovered from the excavations which have brought to light the existence of this ancient civilization are to be found miniature *terra cotta* representations of farm carts on solid wheels fixed to them by stakes of wood, farm animals like the cow, the bull, sheep and pigs, (Fig. 8) birds, balls, whistles, rattles and miniature kitchen utensils. Even the rhinoceros is to be found among these toys, a clear proof that this animal must have frequented the Indus valley. Some of the toys, especially those which represent animals like nodding bulls, appear to have been manipulated by a string-like device, an indication of the mechanical bent of mind of the craftsmen of that distant time.

In chronological sequence, after the Mohenjo-Daro toys come those which may be described as relics of the Nile Valley civilization, dating 2,000 years before the Christian era. These toys show a remarkable resemblance to those of Mohenjo-Daro in so far as they, too, appear to have been manipulated by means of a string, the toy cat with its mobile jaws (Fig. 9) being the counterpart of the nodding bull of the earlier

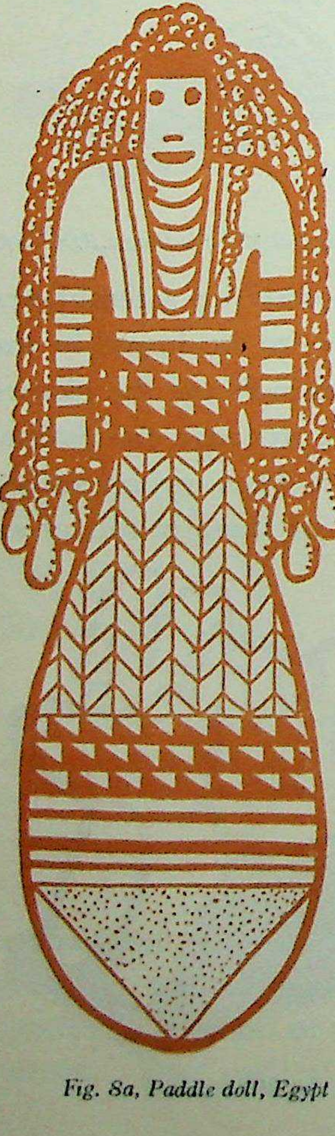


Fig. 8a, Paddle doll, Egypt

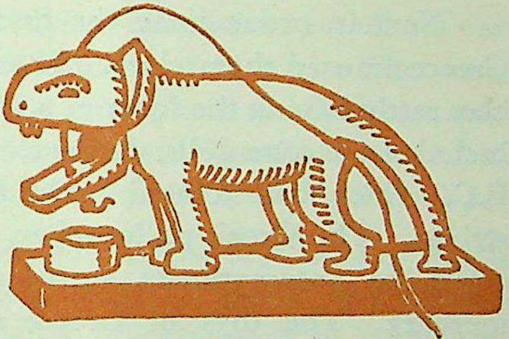


Fig. 9, Cat, Ancient Egypt

civilization. The British Museum has a large collection of these Egyptian toys, consisting of wooden dolls some of which are shaped like the paddles of a canoe. Two of the Museum dolls have hair made of clay pellets. It is believed that they belong to a period between the tenth and seventh centuries B.C.[1] (Fig. 8a) The Egyptian child appears to have played with dolls with jointed limbs, and must have derived pleasure from operating the moving jaws of toy animals, also made of wood. Apart from these actual playthings, large collections of dolls, representing different vocations and resembling the miniature models of the washerman, juggler and milkman, available today in the Indian market, are found among Egyptian antiquities. They cannot, strictly speaking, be described as playthings of children, serving as they did rather as companions to the Egyptian mummies, which explains why they are to be found in coffins along with the mummies. These miniatures include actors, barbers, bakers, cooks, clowns, maids and musicians. We owe these collections to the ancient Egyptian custom of preserving the bodies of their dead, and burying dolls of different kinds along with them.

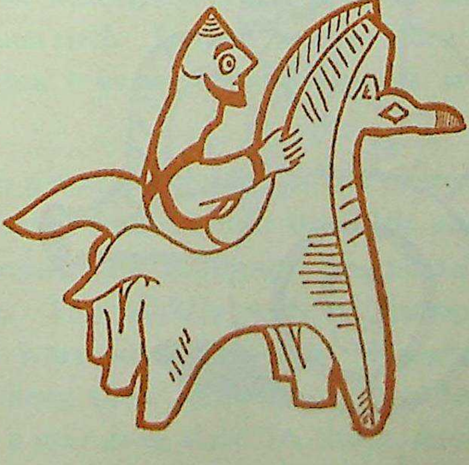


Fig. 10, Rider, Greek toy, c. 5th–4th cent. B. C.

Next in order come the toys with which the children of Greece amused themselves. The oldest known Greek toy is the clay rattle having the form of a woman. Other early Greek toys include *terra cotta* dolls, dating from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., which had jointed limbs that could be manipulated by strings. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, refers to toys which could be automatically moved by means of falling sand or mercury. The toys of Greece show a departure from those which mark the more peaceful civilization which preceded it. They clearly indicate that the idea of toys operating automatically had by that time dawned on the human mind. New kinds of toys, such as horses with riders and soldiers, came into existence in the Greek period (Figs. 10, 11). The pictures that are to be found engraved on Greek pottery show children playing with balls or wearing masks. Hoops appear to have been added to the child's collection of playthings. The Greek girl played with dolls until she got married. Hence the custom at the time of the girl's marriage of leaving a doll at the altar of Artemis, the goddess of unmarried girls.

The Greek legends contain numerous references to moving figures, similar to those in the *Kathasaritsagar*. With the name of Archytas, the Greek philosopher of Tarentum, is associated the first invention of scientific mechanical toys.

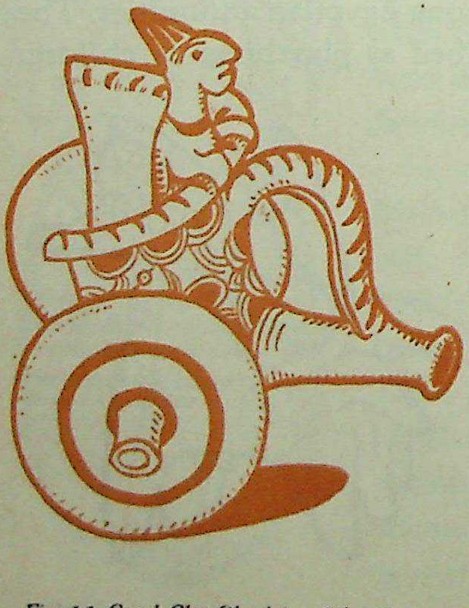


Fig. 11, Greek Clay Chariot, c. 5th-4th cent. B. C.

Mathematical calculations and flying machines as well as the invention of the kite have been attributed to him. The early toys constructed on the pneumatic principle in the West are said to have been the invention of Vitruvius, the Roman architect and engineer, who lived about the time of Julius Caesar (55 B. C.).

From the Greek we pass on to the Roman toys, among which we find a much greater variety both of media and subject matter. To the previously known objects, such as carts and hoops, more toys of wood, displaying greater ingenuity on the part of the craftsman, came to be added by the Romans. For example, they made plaques of wood containing figures controlled by strings. The top also appeared on the scene for the first time. One notices a transition from *terra cotta* and wood to metal and cloth as the material used for making different types of dolls. Some of the toys left behind in Britain by the Romans consisted of tin soldiers and dolls' furniture, somewhat resembling modern toys of that description. Figurines like those discovered with the Egyptian mummies have also been found in Roman tombs. The Roman girl, like her Greek sister, took her doll to the altar of Diana before she got married. In his works Horace compares human beings to wooden toys whose movements are controlled by strings.

The next period which shows a marked change in the character of toys is that of the Middle Ages round about the 12th and 13th centuries. During this period the influence of religion is visible in the making of toys. The Middle Ages of Europe were noted for their religious wars and Crusades. Knights riding on horseback, and flourishing their banners as they led their followers into battle, were a common sight in those days. It is no wonder then that they should have left their impress on the imagination of the child. Unfortunately, there are very few museum pieces which can give us an idea of the kind of toys that must have delighted the children of that period. We can, however, get a better idea from the literary and historical records of this age of chivalry which reveal the child's passion for banners and the paraphernalia of armed warriors on horseback. A knight on horseback forms part of a valuable collection in the Cluny Museum in Paris.

The 14th century may be said to mark a turning point in the history of toys. The toy industry began at this time to develop into an organized activity, and trade relations came to be established between different countries, resulting in the export of toys from one country to another. The beautiful costume dolls of France were among the first toys to make their way to foreign markets. The doll, made primarily for the amusement of the child, became a messenger of goodwill and understanding among the peoples of neighbouring countries. In the year 1390 A.D., the Queen of England is said to have received a group of French dolls dressed in rich and fashionable costumes, representing the ladies of the French court. The French word, *jouet*, for 'toy', occurs for the first time in 1523 in the list of possessions of Princess Marguerite of Austria. The French dolls became instrumental in setting fashions in other European countries. Doll-making as an organized industry may be said to have commenced in France in the 14th century. A French manuscript of that century records the repair of a windmill belonging to Princess Isobel of France. Two centuries later, the writings of Rabelais describe Gargantua's childhood, when he is supposed to have ridden wooden horses. Rabelais also describes toy windmills which had evidently become popular in his day. It is recorded that King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden received costume dolls from France about three centuries ago. These dolls are to be found among the collections belonging to the University of Uppsala.

A new departure noticeable in the beginning of the 14th century with regard to the playthings of children is the development of group games. The pictures of this period represent children playing at skittles, with bat and ball, shuttle-cocks, kites, hoops, whip-tops, drums, stilts, air balloons and skipping ropes. The passions that swayed the multitude and drove them to commit deeds of cruelty which, in normal times, would be regarded as shocking excited a kind of lugubrious merriment, rather than horror, during the French Revolution. Not only the older folk but even children came under the influence of this wave of cruelty and horror. While the grown-ups among the revolutionaries rejoiced in the gruesome effectiveness of the guillotine in making short work of the hated aristocrats, they wanted even their children to share their excitement, and invented toy guillotines for them to play with. Thus, the children of that period amused themselves not only with the most attractive of toys but with some of the most hideous ones. It is, indeed, sad that even in our own day, when we pride ourselves on the progress of our civilization, the toy market should be flooded with miniature representations of the implements of war. No doubt, children no longer play with toy guillotines, which have become obsolete, but they play with toy tanks, armoured cars, battle-ships, cannon, bombers and submarines, which go to form an impressive array of the engines of destruction of the modern age. It is well worth pondering whether the militant spirit should thus be allowed to take hold of the tender minds of children.

Children in England during the Middle Ages, like those of the neighbouring countries, were inspired by tales of chivalry, characteristic of the Crusades, and played with toy knights and banners. Toys were once imported into England from the Netherlands. The origin of the word 'toy' is traceable to the Dutch word 'tuig'. The phrase 'Flanders' babies' suggests that the dolls with which English children played came largely from Holland in early days[2]. The toy theatre, which originated in England, is a later development. However, the toy theatres of England were complete with stage settings, and cardboard figures and must be regarded as a distinctive feature of the development of toys in England. Interesting and elaborate plays and scenes were staged by manipulating strings. Queen Victoria had a famous collection of dolls. (Fig. 12) It is said that she put her

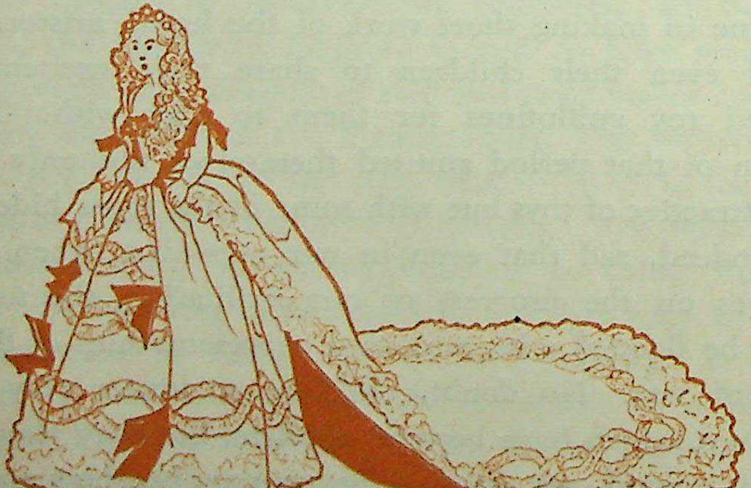


Fig. 12 English doll, early Victorian period

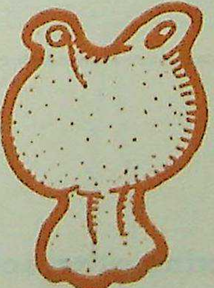
best needlework into the gowns of these dolls, and took an almost girlish delight in naming them after the ladies of her court or after renowned contemporary actresses who provided the models. Small, jointed wooden dolls attracted her fancy. Another large collection of toys was made by Eugene Field, the author of popular verses for children like "Winken, Blynken and Nod" and "Little Boy Blue".

Toy-making as an industry was first organized in the town of Nuremberg in Germany, which soon expanded into one of the largest toy-manufacturing centres. Even before 1500 A.D., Nuremberg was noted for its makers of dolls and dolls' houses. Several museums in England and on the Continent have among their collections specimens of the wonderful dolls' houses with complete furnishings, including well-equipped kitchens made in Nuremberg. Holland, too, has acquired a well-deserved reputation for the manufacture of toys. One need only mention the famous Utrecht dolls' house of 1670, fitted up with vases and other art treasures. The best models of such dolls' houses are to be seen today in the Central Museum at Utrecht and also in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The history of toys in the New World is comparatively recent. It dates from about 1699 A. D., when William Billiken took the doll, Letitia Penn, with him from England to the United States of America. As an industry toy-making acquired importance in the States only after about 1800 A. D. It made rapid progress during the first World War, when the import of toys from Europe had stopped. The largest toy-making centres in the United States today are Winchendon (Mass.), Pennsylvania and New England. The two last-mentioned States are particularly known for their folk art and toys. There is an interesting reference to the toy industry by Carl W. Dreppard in *Pioneer America,* which is a history of America during the first three centuries. He says: "the most important fact revealed by a study of American toy industry is this: the world toy industry was born right here in the United States". Although one cannot agree with this statement, it must be conceded that the United States, which made a late start, has succeeded in establishing a large toy industry of the order of a hundred million dollars, perhaps the largest in the world.

The great Exhibition of 1851 in Britain opened up vast possibilities for all kinds of industries, including the toy-manufacturing industry. As a result of the progress of science, not only did mechanized toys come into fashion but they soon began to flood the markets. When they were first exhibited, mechanically operated toys were labelled as "philosophical apparatus", as they owed their special features to the natural sciences, and also because they provided instruction in addition to entertainment. Since they were produced on a mass scale, they were cheap, especially those imported from Austria and Germany, where labour was not costly and toys could be manufactured at competitive prices. The use of India rubber in the manufacture of toys was an innovation which enabled the introduction of new features. Sounds resembling those produced by human beings and animals began to be heard for the first time in toyland, for dolls which sang or squeaked, birds which chirped, dogs which barked and other animals with their characteristic cries made their appearance. This was the signal of a new era in which toys came to be specifically and consciously designed for helping the child in its mental and physical development. France and

Switzerland took the lead in the construction of ingenious toys worked by springs and clockwork. They made birds which could fly from twig to twig, dolls which could open and shut their eyes, miniature railway engines, carriages and numerous other mechanically operated playthings for children. Switzerland became famous for the variety and novelty of its toys.



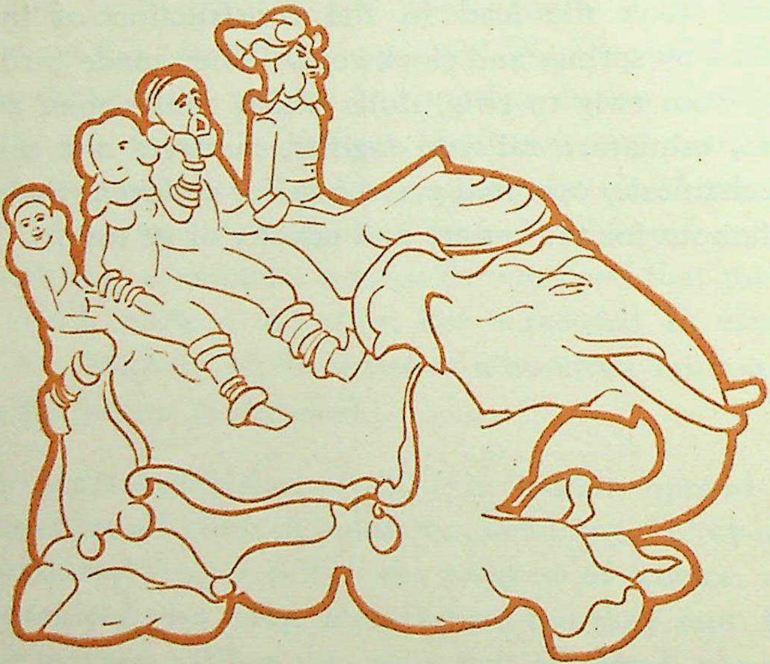


Fig. 13, Bronze Elephant, Andhra (Satavahana) c. 100 A.D. Kolhapur, Bombay State .

CHAPTER III

TOYS

From Excavated Sites

THE stages of human progress as revealed in differing patterns of social life and in different communities have been traced in various ways. Small objects of stone or pottery found among ancient ruins, pieces of sculpture, frescoes, seals, inscriptions and literary records are some of the material which enables the historian to fill up the gaps dividing different eras in the history of mankind. A toy may seem too trivial to be taken notice of in connexion with the study of a people's culture, or in determining the prevailing mode of life or interests of people belonging to a particular era. Nevertheless, the toys that have been found by archaeologists, while conducting their excavations in India, provide valuable pieces of evidence of a certain type of life, and mark the relative progress of civilizations which existed simultaneously in other parts of the world, at a time when contacts and communications between the different countries were infrequent. Some of these toys give us a picture of the environment of the child of the period to which they belong, and from this point of view they must be regarded as a valuable aid in reconstructing some portion of the history of ancient India, in the absence of written or deciphered records.

The earliest toys found so far, of which specimens can be seen in museums, belong to the period of the Mohenjo-Daro or the Indus Valley civilization (*circa* 3,500 B.C.). Heaps of *terra cotta* toys were unearthed in the course of the excavations carried out at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The figurines included among them are somewhat difficult to

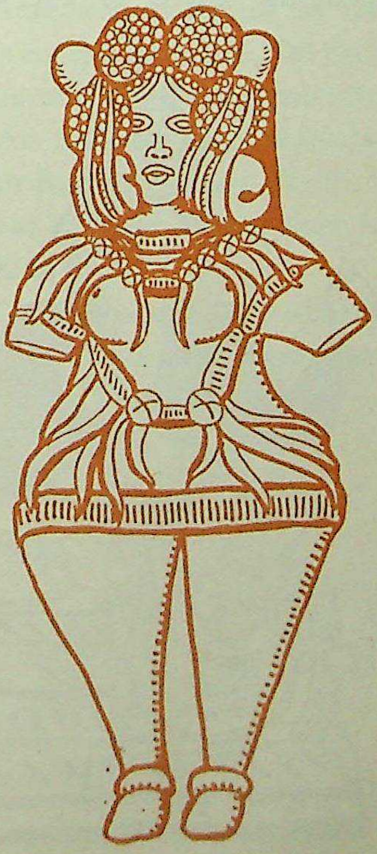


Fig.13a, Figurine, 2nd to 3rd Century A.D.

classify, for miniature images in India have various rôles assigned to them (Fig. 13a). They may be cult objects, images of gods, goddesses or heroes, or just toys for the amusement of children. It is even possible that some of these figurines may have had funerary rôles assigned to them, as in ancient Egypt. The difficulty of drawing the line between a cult object and the plaything of a child is all the greater because of the possible transformation of the one into the other after the termination of its temporary assignment or purpose (Fig. 13b). Broadly speaking, there is every reason for believing that certain figurines were intended to be *replicas* of human beings, made specifically to serve as playthings for children.

The toys of the Indus Valley civilization represent a peaceful agricultural life, although the Mohenjo-Daro civilization is believed to have been urban rather than rural in character. The co-existence of an agricultural condition of life, furnished by such toys as the farm-cart and the humped bull, with the unmistakable evidence of an advanced urban civilization to be found in ruins of the Great Bath and the materials used for building construction

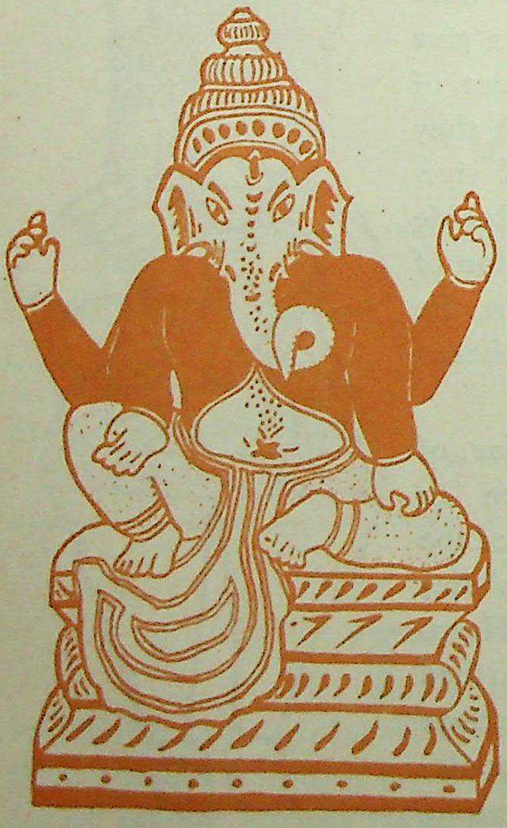


Fig. 13b, Toy Ganesha

associated with Mohenjo-Daro, has been explained in the preceding chapter.

The toys recovered from these excavations throw streaks of light on civilizations other than that of the Indus Valley, and strike one by the close resemblance they bear to objects found in excavated sites in Kish (Sumer), Egypt, Anau in South Kurgan (Turkestan) and Palaikaestro (Greece), e. g., the wheeled vehicles, birds mounted on wheels, marbles and dice(Fig. 13c). The origin of the wheeled wagon has been the subject of much discussion among archaeologists. A pottery model on four wheels found in the explorations at Anau has been assigned as early a date as 3,200 B.C. by Sir John Marshall. Similar vehicles and chariots have also been discovered at Kish (Sumer). At a later date, vehicles appear in Cappadocia and Egypt. According to Sydney Smith, a seal in the British Museum bears witness to their appearance in Cappadocia between 2,100 and 1,900 B. C.

Sir Arthur Evans dates a European four-wheeled toy vehicle of painted pottery, found at Palaikaestro (Greece), as "somewhat anterior to the close of the 3rd millennium B. C."[3] The archaeological evidence tends to indicate that the wheeled vehicle originated in Central Asia. The sledge was supposed to be in use in Sumer and Egypt in very early times. The axle revolving with the wheel is identified as the Sumerian type of wheel. It is said to

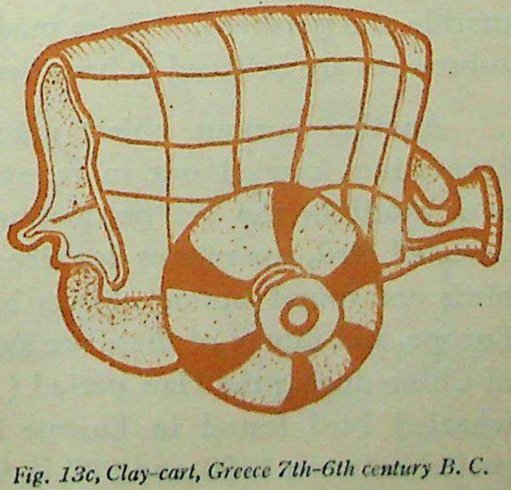


Fig. 13c, Clay-cart, Greece 7th-6th century B. C.

be still in existence in Sind. Marbles and dice do not, strictly speaking, fall in the category of toys. Marbles, however, appear to have been used as playthings, although rarely in Sumer. In Egypt and South Kurgan they have been found in large quantities. There is a remarkably close resemblance between the Egyptian marbles and those found in the Mohenjo-Daro excavations. As for dice, it is not definitely known what types of games were played with them, although a variety of artistic gamesmen are to be found among the objects recovered from Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. The dice found at Harappa are of different varieties in the sense that the markings on them are not always the same. It is also interesting to note that the dice of the Puranic period are said to have been entirely different in shape from those found at Mohenjo-Daro. The dice of Mohenjo-Daro having been found at shallow levels, are believed to have belonged to a later date in that civilization. An interesting conclusion with regard to the nature of society in the Mohenjo-Daro period has been drawn from the fact that the gamesmen of that period are made of different materials such as agate, shell, marble and potsherd. Those made of potsherd and other cheap substances are believed to have been used by the poorer people.

Another curious object among the articles found in the excavations carried out in many parts of the world, and used as a motif in the art productions of certain countries, is the wheeled bird, sometimes described as a bird chariot. Wheeled birds are found among objects belonging to the Bronze Age of Europe, and motifs of these are again to be seen in the art works of China during the Han period (206 B. C. to 220 A. D.). The wheeled bird found in Europe is supposed to belong to the period between 1300 and 900 B. C., and that found in China to a period of about 200 years before the Christian Era. The wide gap between the appearance of this curious object in different places makes it difficult to establish any connexion, although two writers, Prof. Seligman and B. Laufer, have indicated that the origin of the wheeled bird in China can be traced to the European source. Wheeled birds have been found at Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and at Basarh in the Muzaffarpur District of Bihar. (Fig. 14) The wheeled bird from Basarh is supposed to belong to the Gupta period. Birds and other animals on wheels are common to this day in the Punjab. It can be maintained that there is a remarkable continuity in the existence of the wheeled bird, beginning with pre-historic times and continuing to our

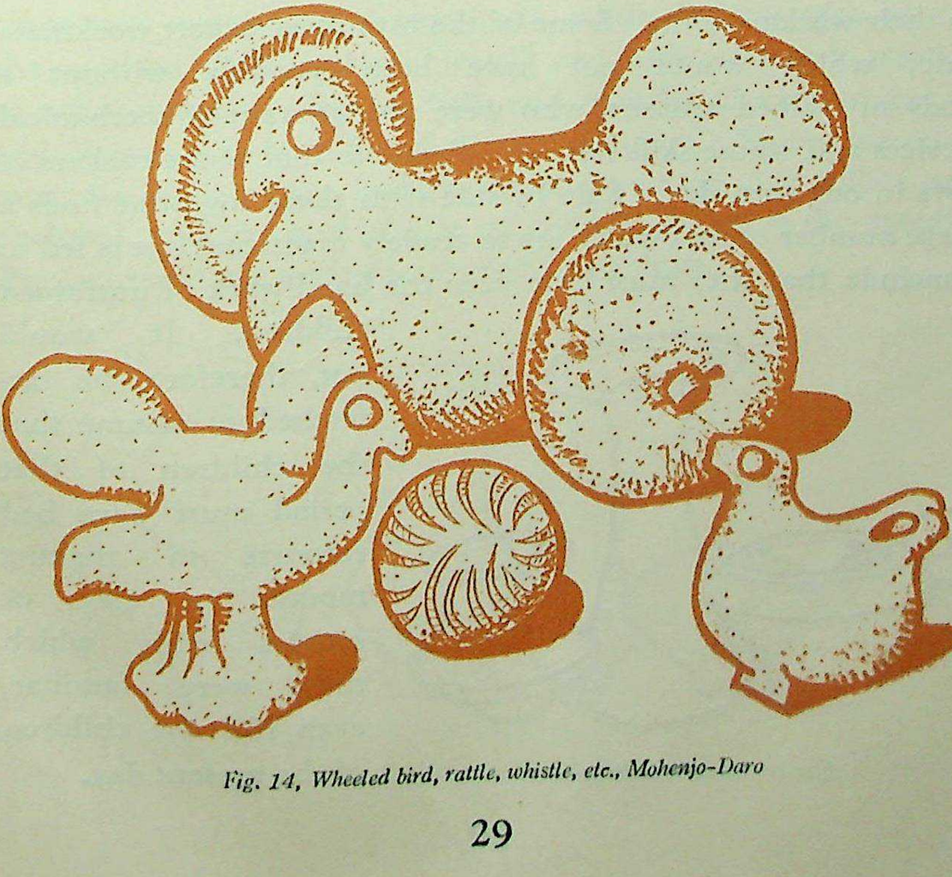


Fig. 14, Wheeled bird, rattle, whistle, etc., Mohenjo-Daro own day. Mr. N. G. Muzumdar has expressed the view that it is likely that the wheeled bird was introduced into China from India with which she has long cultural and religious connexions.[4]

The excavations of Mohenjo-Daro, according to archaeologists, leave no doubt in the mind about the existence of a well-ordered life and urban civilization more than three thousand years ago. The toys, of which large quantities have been discovered, especially at Harappa, furnish additional evidence of the domestic life associated with that civilization, because they indicate several aspects of that life even more strikingly than the larger finds about which so much has been written. The most noticeable feature about these toys is the difference in their workmanship. Some of the toys show expert workmanship, which would not have been possible without a body of trained artizans, who were not ignorant of mechanical devices and whose skill was not inferior to that of the makers of toys in our own day. Side by side with these toys, one finds a large number of toys which are so crudely made that one is led to conclude that they must have been the handiwork of untrained children. It would not, therefore, be far-fetched to assume that the children of that period must have had recourse to making models in clay of articles with which they were familiar, even like the children of the present day.

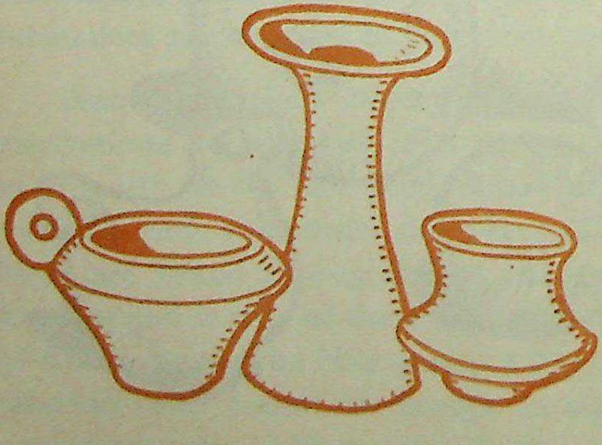


Fig. 15, Utensils, Mohenjo-Daro

Toy sieves, baskets and saddle-querns or grinding stones are some of the articles that afford proof that the mode of life in those days must not have been very different from that of our own day, especially as the kitchen implements were very nearly the same as those to be found in the kitchen of an average Indian family today. Among the toys one comes across toy bird-cages and dogs with collars, which give us an idea of the domestic pets which the householder of those times fancied. The children of the Mohenjo-Daro era had more or less the same interests as those of our own age, as is clear from the large number of toys which represent mugs, jars, other kitchen utensils and heaters (Figs. 15, 16), the only difference being that those toys were made of *terra cotta,* while the toys with which the modern child amuses himself are made of wood, plastic, or other material. Rattles, balls and whistles of various shapes and designs have been found all over the place. Special mention must be made of the ball-like rattle in which clay pellets are enclosed, and the bird-whistle or *ghuggu,* which is the generic Punjabi name for a whistle, shaped like a dove.

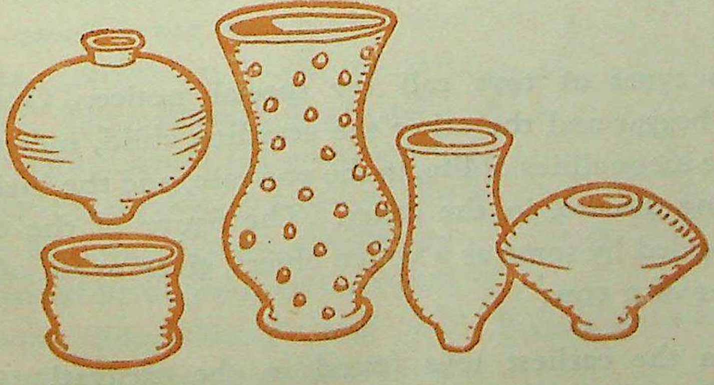


Fig. 16, Utensils, Mohenjo-Daro

In the Harappa finds one comes across figures of land and aquatic animals and birds covering a very wide range. Among the animals are included bulls, goats, rams, tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, pigs and dogs of various types. The rodent and the reptile also have their place among the child's playthings, for they include the squirrel, the mongoose, the snake and even the armadillo. Among the aquatic animals, the crocodile, the turtle, fish and ducks abound, while the birds and insects include kites, peahens, pigeons, sparrows, parrots, owls, cocks and grass-hoppers. The toy-birds of Mohenjo-Daro resemble the handmade wooden toys of the present day with their fixable feet and feathers. It is believed that Chanho-Daro was a large toy manufacturing centre.

It appears from the variety of subjects covered by the toys of Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and Chanho-Daro that in designing playthings for children care was taken to awaken their interest in a large variety of natural objects. The educative value of toys was thus appreciated even in those days. Some of the *terra cotta* toys have painted designs or engravings on them, which make them artistic and presentable and indicate that the aesthetic value of toys was certainly not lost sight of in ancient times.

Two types of toys call for special notice. One is the strolling beggar and the other the crawling child, indicating the economic inequalities of life, in the one case, and the incidence of a crippling disease, in the other. The figure of the child has been regarded by some as a votive object, given as an offering in fulfilment of a vow.

From the earliest toys found in the excavations on the Indus Valley sites one may pass on to those which have been recovered from archaeological excavations carried out in the Indo–Gangetic Valley. Interesting *terra cottas* belonging to this later civilization, which have not yet been fully classified, include animals, birds, miniature pottery and figurines. The excavations at Kosam in Allahabad, Sarnath, in Banaras, Pataliputra, Champaran, Basarh and Buxar in Bihar, Ahichchatra[5], (Fig. 16a). Rajghat, Mathura and Sankisa in Uttar Pradesh, and Rajshahi and Rangmati in Bengal have yielded a wealth of *terra cotta* objects. Even if we exclude the human figurines, some of the other objects would appear to have served as playthings of children. These finds have been dated as belonging to the Mauryan and the late Gupta periods. Similar objects have been found in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The *terra cottas* found at Besnagar in Madhya Pradesh are attributed to the late Gupta period. The similarity of these objects in form and idea to those recovered from Mohenjo–Daro and Harappa establishes a connexion between these civilizations, separated as they are from each other by thousands of years.

So far, mention has been made only of Indian civilization north of the Vindhyas. The existence of an independent culture and civilization south of the Vindhyas, dating prior to the Christian Era, was recently established beyond doubt by excavations in Arikamedu near Pondicherry[6] and the Brahmagiri and Chandravalli excavations[7] in Chitaldrug District in

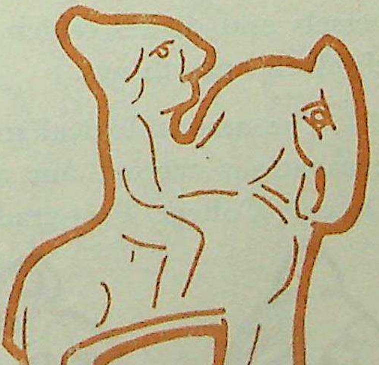


Fig. 16a, Aswapala (horse and rider), 550-650 A.D. Ahichchatra, U. P.

Mysore State. The Brahmagiri excavations brought to light three types of culture which were interrelated. The granite balls and the miniature pottery belonging to the stone age and megalithic culture before the Christian Era may well be excluded for the purposes of the present study, as there is no definite proof that they were the playthings of children. It can, however, be said with some degree of certainty that the Andhra level culture reveals the existence of toys. This culture, as evidenced by the Brahmagiri and the Chandravalli excavations, ranging between the 1st century and the 3rd century A. D., shows the existence of a *terra cotta* marble and roughly modelled animal figures. Among the finds is a bronze rattle (Fig. 17) with a design in low relief resembling a grotesque face, which incidentally indicates a transition from granite and *terra cotta* objects to those of metal. This rattle was discovered in a late stratum of the Andhra level culture. The Chandravalli site has also yielded numerous miniature vases of grey ware, vessels and dishes which, in all probability, were designed for children's playthings.

The archaeological treasures that came to light during the excavations carried out at Brahmapuri, in Kolhapur, by the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute revealed several objects made of bronze. Most of these have been assigned to the *Satavahana* period. Among them, of particular interest and beauty is a seated elephant with four persons riding him, which has been assigned a date going back to c. 100 A. D. (Fig. 13).

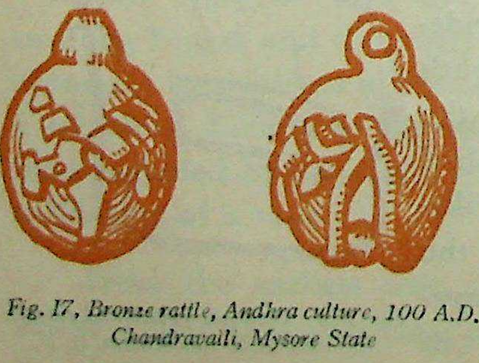


Fig. 17, Bronze rattle, Andhra culture, 100 A.D.
Chandravalli, Mysore State

These finds have led archaeologists to infer that there must have been not only contacts between the western world and India's ports in the past, but that the trade relations that existed must have infiltrated into the interior, as some of the objects discovered show distinct traces of Roman influence[3].

The picture that emerges from the wealth of material that archaeologists have recovered from the few excavated sites in this vast country is, indeed, instructive. It shows that in the manufacture of toys the ancient craftsmen of India spared no pains. They provided the children with models of almost all the domestic and the important wild animals and the deities of the Hindu pantheon so that in playing with these toys they might unconsciously widen their knowledge of and interest in animal life and imbibe the traditional culture of the country. The craftsmen also reproduced in a miniature form

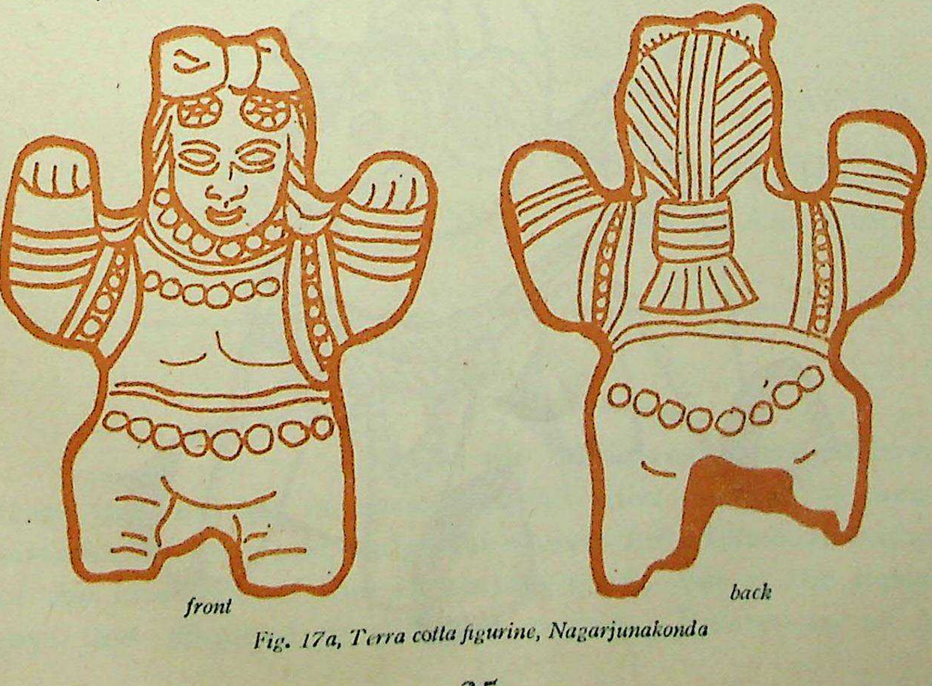
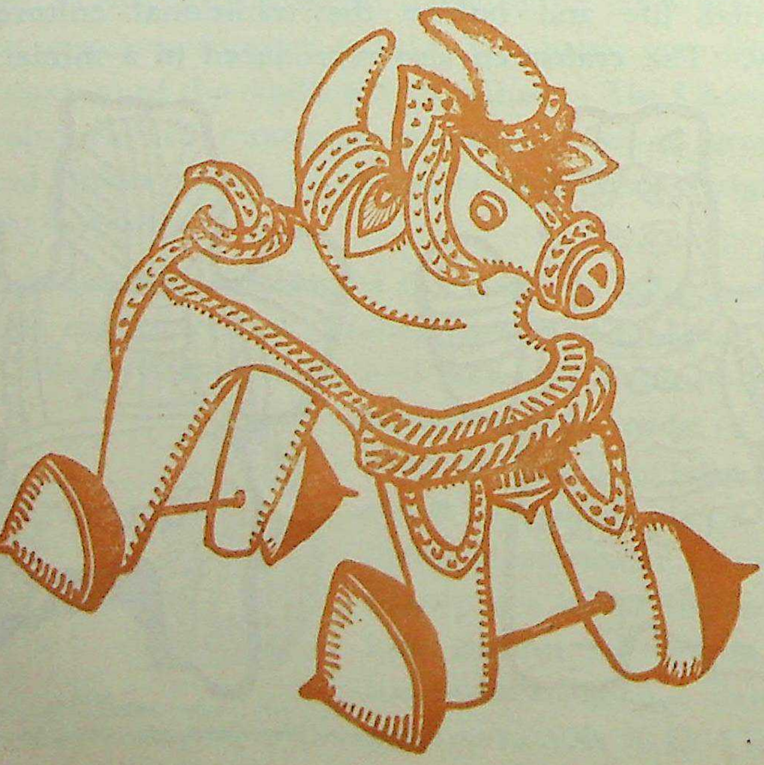


Fig. 17a, Terra cotta figurine, Nagarjunakonda the pots and pans in domestic use. Mention must be made here of the tradition of the Indian potter to make a miniature of every shape he turns out for the lady of the house, so that when he sells his wares for household use he also provides the children of the family with the miniatures of these wares to play with. The toys produced in some areas have their own peculiar features. Thus, Harappa and Chanho-Daro specialized in animals and birds. Kosam had its toy-carts and tried to represent the toycart of Mrichakatika fame. Sarnath, on the other hand, was interested in horses with riders. Further south, one finds the traces of foreign influences and contacts. Brahmapuri, for example, provides us with imitations of Graeco-Roman ware that had, no doubt, been introduced by international trade.



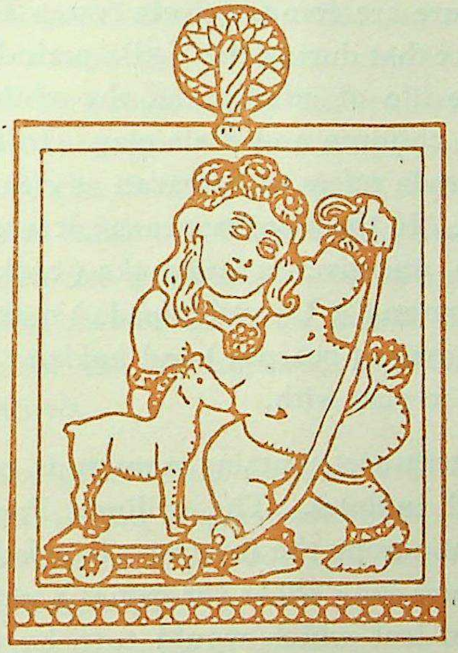


Fig. 18, Sculpture, Nagarjunakonda, 2nd-3rd cent. A. D.

CHAPTER IV

SOURCES:

Literary And Sculptural

FROM the specimens of toys recovered from the remains of ancient buried cities one has to turn to historical, literary and sculptural sources for additional evidence of the existence of toys in ancient times, and of the types of toys that obtained in different periods. References to toys in Vedic literature are comparatively few. This may, perhaps, be due to the fact that during the Vedic period greater attention was paid to the life of adults, and the philosophy of life in general, than to children and their play. In the Mahabharata[9], in one place, Narada refers to Satyavan as *citrasva* or the maker of (clay) horses. In the Varahapurana[10], it is stated that Skanda, the son of Shiva, was given a *kridanaka* (cock) as a toy, while, the Brahmandapurana[11] (Upodghitapada) makes mention of two birds, namely, *mayura* (peacock) and *kukkuta* (cock) that were given to Skanda to play with.

Buddhist literature contains numerous references to toys, both direct and indirect. The Milinda Panho[12] and Diggha Nikaya show that among the toys were *bangkakka* (toy-plough), *ghatika* (short and long sticks for games), *chingulaka* (a wheel made of coconut leaf which would turn by the impact of the wind) and *ratham* (chariot). Jain literature of about the same period contains words denoting toys. *Cowries* (shells), which were among the playthings of the child, are mentioned as *khullaya*. The *tindusa* or ball is also mentioned. The ubiquitous doll is styled *pottula*. Tip-cat games are referred to as *vattaya* and *adoliya*[13]. There is also a reference to the tip-cat (*vita*) game in the Mahabharata, Adiparva, Chapter 131.17, which the warriors are described as playing gleefully. The Suyagadan[14] makes further mention of the *gorahaga* or bullock, *cela-gola* or cloth ball and *dindima*, a drum. This variety of toys, which is comparable to the different types of toys of the present day, throws further light on the kind of life lived in those days. In the Brahmajalsutta[15] no distinction is made between toys and games, or between toys intended for boys and those intended for girls. It mentions *akham* as the name of a ball-game played by girls. The dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples, which reflect the social and political conditions as well as the religious life of the people of the 5th century B. C., are full of such references to games. For example, in the discourse on *sila* or morality, the Buddha refers to a number of them. The Diggha Nikaya and the Majjhima Nikaya[16] give a list of the games, which are governed by certain rules of conduct, while the discussion reveals the high degree of sportsmanship that was expected of the participants, on which the Buddha has expressed his views.

Among the sculptures that furnish evidence of toys are those from Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda. These belong to the 2nd and 3rd centuries A. D. Some of these sculptures have scenes in which children playing with toys figure prominently. In others, relating to the works of the Emperor Harsha, and some more showing the life of the Buddha, figures of children playing with toys are also included. In the panel showing Rahula being presented to the Buddha are to be seen a toy-horse and a toy-elephant[17] (Fig. 19), while another panel has a two-wheeled cart, a horse and children (Figs. 20, 20a) holding balls and rattles in their hands[18]. The cart has a roof and a semi-solid type of spoked wheel. The roof of the cart is beautifully carved. The horse which is on four wheels is led by one of the children with a string. Some more interesting scenes are of children

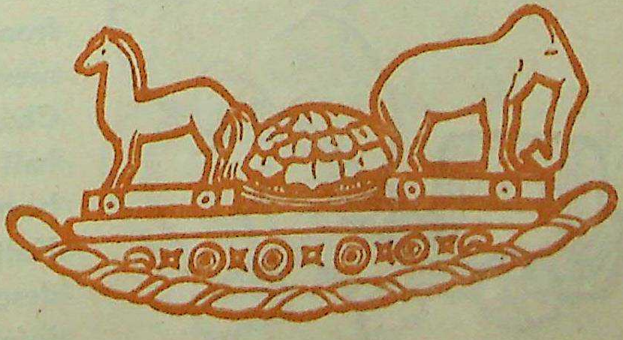


Fig. 19, Rahula's toys, Sculpture, Amaravati building sand castles. Such play is really outside the scope of this book, but mention of it is made here to show that much the same amusements and diversions interested the children of thousands of years ago as today. Similarly, bows and arrows were things of great interest to the children of those days. They are continuously referred to in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Among the Buddhist sculptures also there are some which depict the Buddha and his cousin as youths proceeding on a shooting expedition.

Subsequent to the 2nd and 3rd centuries A. D., Sanskrit literature abounds in references to toys. The Kamasutra mentions a long list of *kalas* or arts and crafts. This takes one somewhat further, because newer forms of play seem to have developed in the interval. Puppets and puppet–plays such as *sutakriya* and *duhitrika* respectively, and model houses named *hatari* are brought to light. Dolls and balls assume new Sanskrit names, and are known as *putrika* and *kanduka*. One more step forward is also apparent from the *kanduka–nritya* mentioned in Dashakumara Charitra. It emphasizes the ball games in which both boys and girls participated. Kalidasa's works, rich in description, abound with information about toys. The Goddess Parvati's

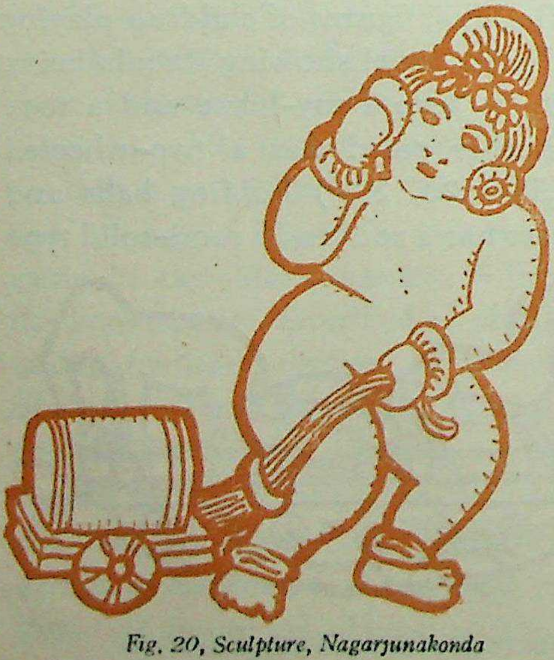


Fig. 20, Sculpture, Nagarjunakonda

childhood in Kumarasambhava[19] on the banks of the Mandakini river, the building of sand-castles in the company of her friends and her balls (*kanduka*) and dolls (*kritrimaputrika*) portray vividly the child's requirements both with regard to environment and play. The painted earthen peacock (*varna chittritaha mruttika mayuraha*)[20] which Shakuntala asks Suvrata to fetch for Bharat was the counterpart of the modern painted toy. We may infer from this that painted toys have been in continuous existence from ancient times right down to our own. And could one forget the famous drama Mrichhakatika of Shudraka wherein the toy cart of clay and that of gold form the main theme?

Imaginative fiction in Indian literature, like the Kathasaritsagar or Ocean of Stories, must be given its due place, because it enables one to gauge the flights of imagination of the ancients and throws light at the same time on the then current trend of thought and action and contemporary civilization. The Kathasaritsagar is believed to be a compilation by many writers. Nevertheless, it indicates, in no small measure, a variety of interesting aspects of the life of those days, especially in the matter of mechanical con-

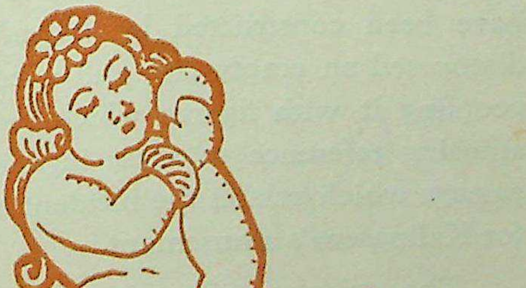
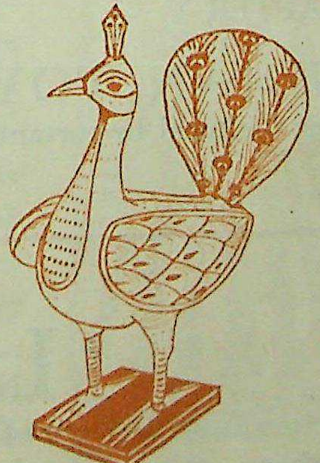


Fig. 20a, Sculpture, Nagarjunakonda

trivances, magical devices and fantastic theories. A large number of its stories is dominated by such factors. These stories give us ideas which anticipate the earliest mechanical inventions and the ingenious toys of Europe. At the same time, the idea of kites and flying machines comes into prominence. Similarly, inventions of toys constructed on the pneumatic principle are also found to make their appearance. It must not be lost sight of that many mechanical devices in the West, which later developed into engineering inventions like the locomotive, were first conceived and constructed as toys.

Reverting to the Kathasaritsagar, reference may be made to the interesting wooden dolls flying through the air, or to the example of Naravahanaduta[21], who is said to have come across a city thickly populated by wooden figures that moved and appeared to be full of life. This toy population was supposed to have been constructed by Rajyadhara, a carpenter who had discovered an empty city and tried to relieve his loneliness by peopling it with figures which moved automatically. Another amusing reference to these ingenious toys is contained in the passage which relates the incident of Somaprabha producing toys for Kalingsena's amusement.

The evidence of ancient toys to be found in excavations and in sculptures is necessarily restricted to materials of a non-perishable nature, such as stone, *terra cotta* and metal. About toys made of perishable materials, like cloth and wood, the only evidence available to us is that which is contained in old literature, indicating the material used for the making of certain types of toys in a particular era. From references in Jain, Buddhist and Sanskrit literature we have come to know that children in ancient India had a variety of toys to play with and that they also played certain group games governed by their own rules. The literary and sculptural sources must be treated as authentic records in so far as they describe contemporary incidents or scenes. The accumulated material from all the three sources, namely, excavations, sculpture and literature, leads to the conclusion that, side by side with plain *terra cotta* toys, there existed toys of other material made more artistically or ingeniously. From the time that historical or literary records are available it appears that many toys which have a modern look were in use in ancient times. There is also evidence that civilization had made as much progress in the south of India as it had north of the Vindhyas as far back as the beginning of the Christian Era.



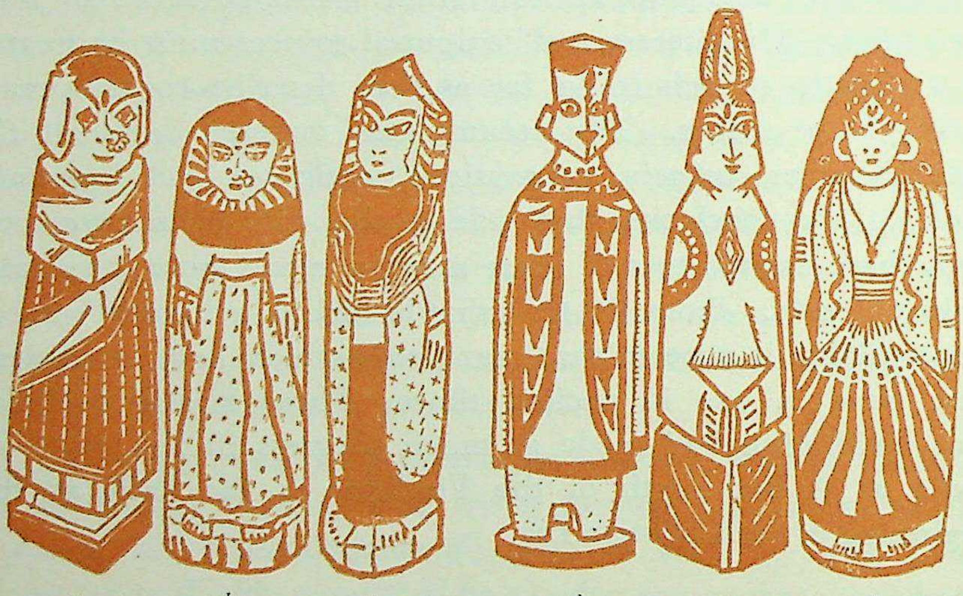


Fig. 21, Thakki dolls

CHAPTER V

INDIAN TOYS,
Their Cultural Importance

IN an earlier chapter, speaking of the figurines from Mohenjo-Daro and other excavated sites, a doubt has been expressed whether they were all toys, or whether some of them, at least, were meant to be cult objects. From an analysis of the representative character of toys one point emerges very clearly. There is ample material to prove that many of the figurines must have been toy *replicas* of images of worship. The unique images of wood and stone modelled on the sculptures of Orissa and South India, available today as toys, indicate that, though the material of the articles may have changed, the ideas have persisted. It would not at all be rare also to find one of such toy images occupying a place on an altar of worship. On seeing some of the decorative bronze toys in the market even to-day doubts arise in one's mind whether they are intended for play or for purposes of worship.

In a general survey of Indian toys of the present day, a reflection of the characteristics of the race and the culture of the people is noticeable in the appearance of the dolls of each region. Thus, the elegance of the women of Rajasthan, the alluring grace and charm of the Bengali woman, the powerful stockiness of the Maharashtrian, the intelligent awareness of the Andhra, the vivaciousness and sharpness of the Tamilian are all represented faithfully in the toys of the respective regions. Similarly, in the doll of Bengal one recognizes the typically Mongolian features (Fig. 22), with narrow eyes and lifted brows, and, even though carved out of a single chip of wood, it

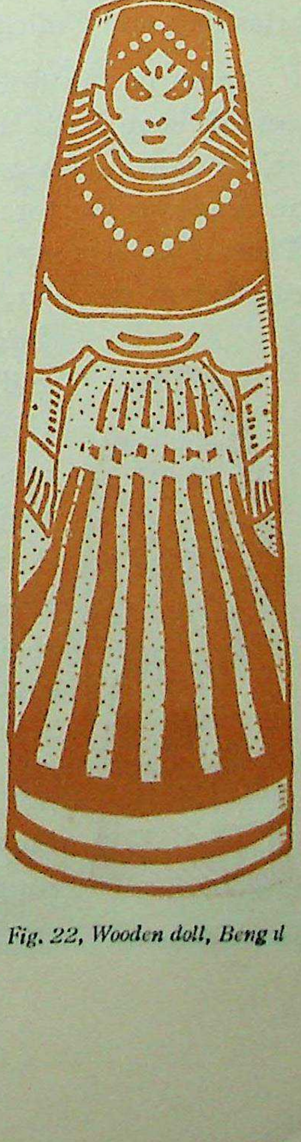


Fig. 22, Wooden doll, Bengal

is elegant and conveys the beautiful art of Bengal. And who can mistake the expression of the Maharashtrian *Thakki*, strong and determined (Fig. 21*a*)? The artistic figures from Andhra, delicate, yet with large sparkling eyes, show an alertness all their own.

Dolls representing the peasant men and women of India are to be found all over the country (Fig. 23). They have their own local names like *Thakki* in Maharashtra, *Gangavati* in Rajasthan and *Kalichandika* in Bengal.

Some of the dolls, for example, dolls from Rajasthan, are dressed beautifully in the lovely costumes of Rajasthan and decked with lavish ornaments from head to foot, starting with the *bindi* on the forehead and ending with tinkling anklet bells (Plate II). Among costume dolls those of Bharatpur are regarded as the best, and a large variety of subjects such as the bride and bride-groom, mother and child, milkmaids and dancers are available. Dolls of this type are in demand among foreigners and are important in view of the rôle they play, which is similar to that of the French dolls. As they are made of soft material, children are able to cuddle them, and readily adopt them as their constant companions in their diminutive make-believe world.

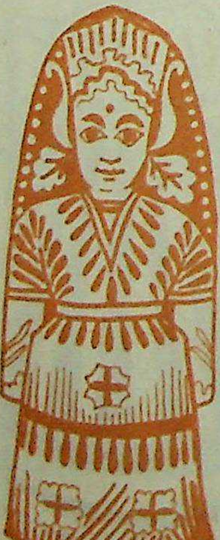


Fig 23, Thakki doll

The toys of Banaras present some interesting features. Sets of liveried men in red and blue uniforms are common. They are supposed to represent the liveried men in the employ of the old East India Company, and

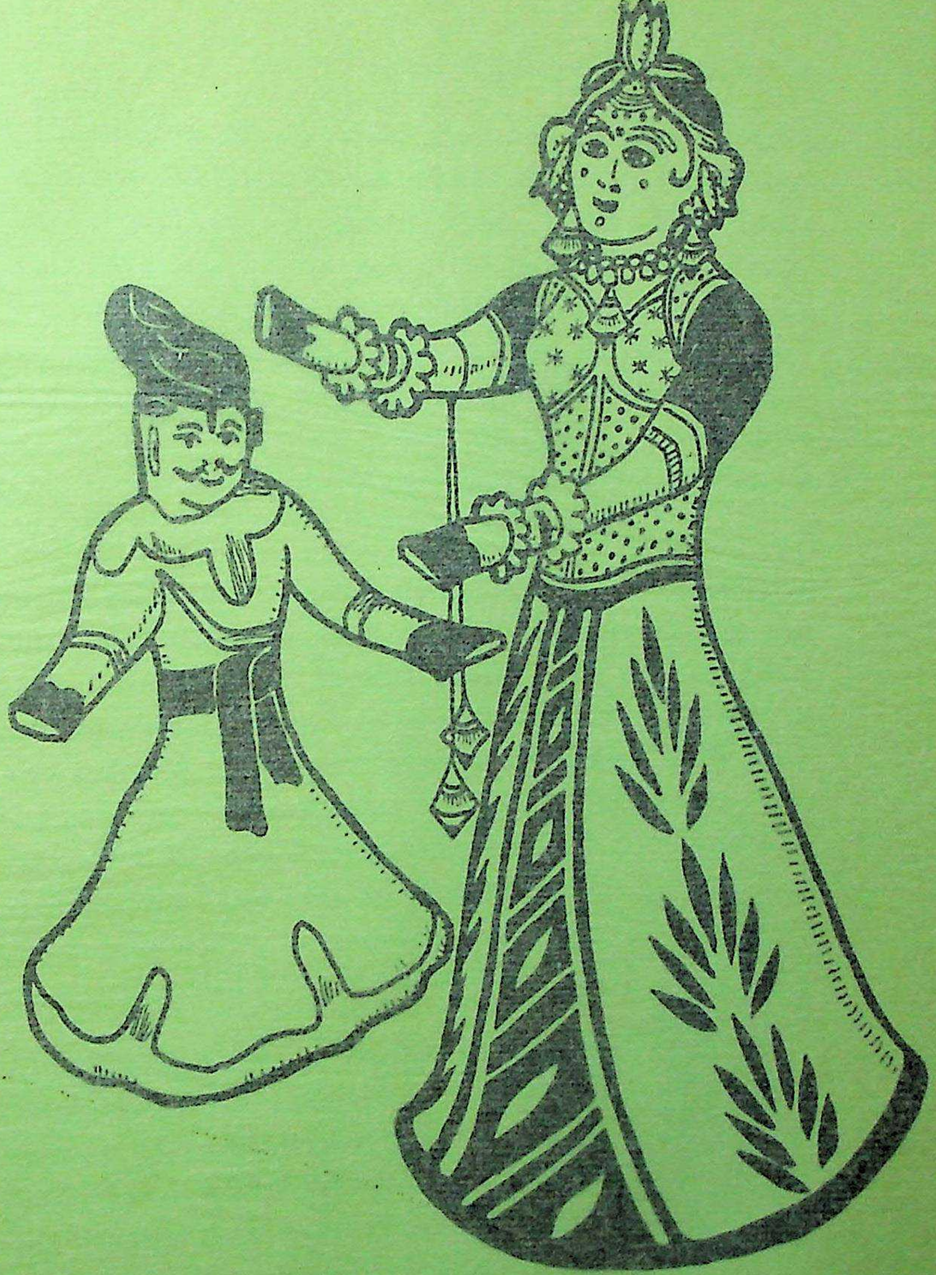


PLATE II
RAJASTHANI DOLLS

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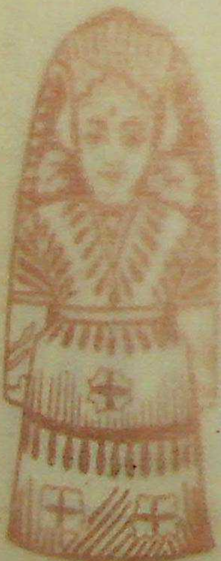

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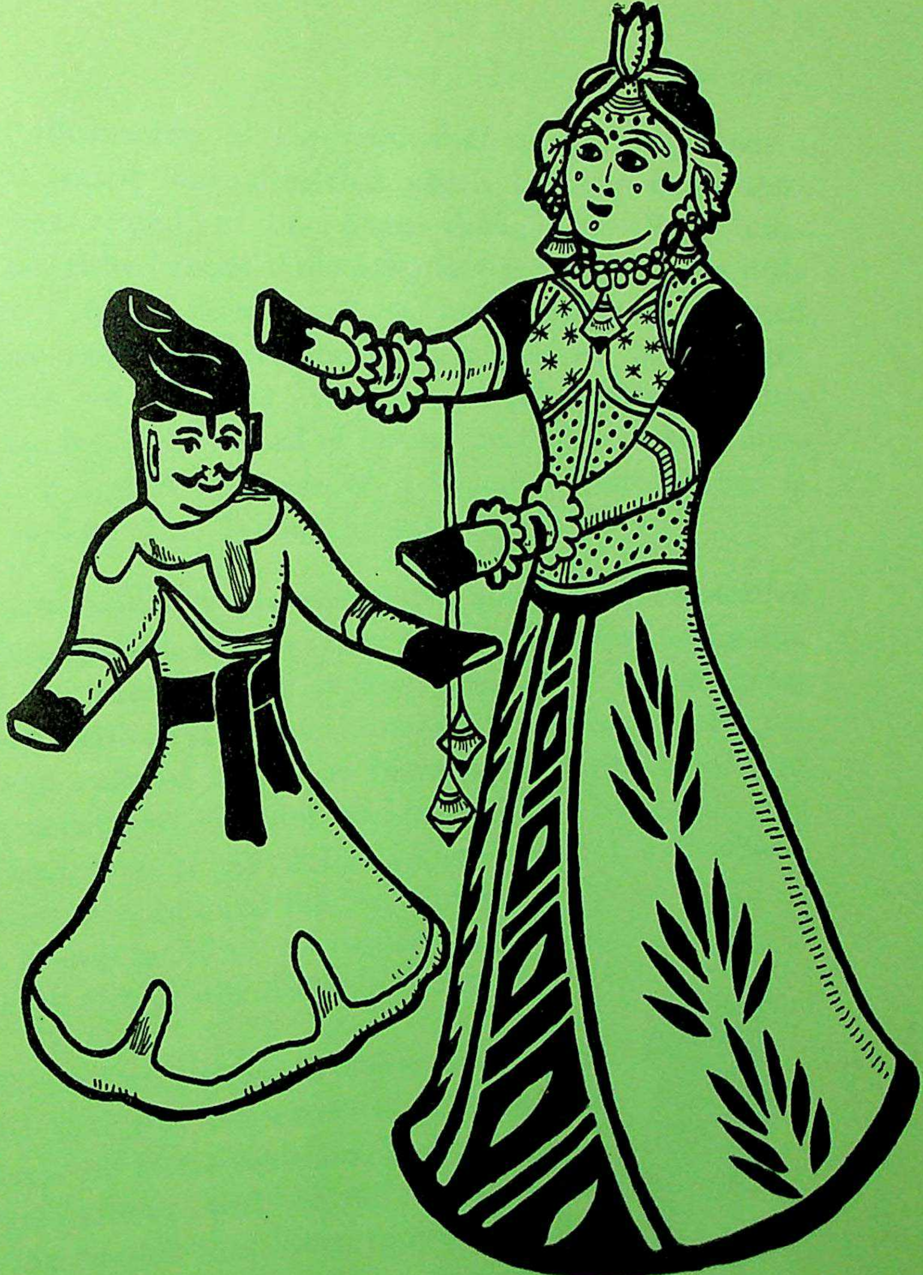


PLATE II
RAJASTHANI DOLLS

furnish an illustration of the truth that things have often a tendency to persist long after that which brought them into existence has ceased to be. Even though the East India Company flourished about three centuries ago and is now little more than a faded memory, these toy *replicas* of liveried Telangas are reminiscent of the historic past in which they flaunted their red and blue uniforms and other paraphernalia. That toys can be a true record of history and help to keep alive the traditions and the culture of a bygone society or age is well illustrated by these Telanga figures (Fig. 24).

The *mayurpankhi* or peacock-boat is another toy illustrative of an ancient period, namely, that of the Emperor Asoka the Great. It can, therefore, be looked upon as a toy of great cultural and historical value. Among toys which serve as historical and cultural links may be mentioned the *terra cotta* toys of Ahichchatra, Rajghat and Kalighat (Bengal). The Mohenjo-Daro toys of 3,500 B. C., the toys of the Kushana period between the 2nd and the 3rd century A. D. and those found in other excavations, it seems, are proto-types of toys still available in India.

The *killa* or fort, popular in Maharashtra, gives ample proof that this toy exercises a fascination on the minds of Maharashtrians, because of its historical associations with Shivaji the Maratha King and the battles that were fought by him and his men in defending several famous forts. It is not uncommon to find miniature forts, complete in every detail, as centres of attraction in homes in Maharashtra on festive occasions

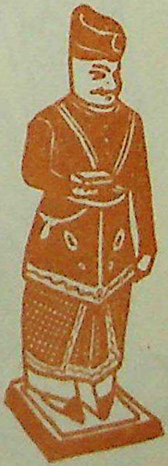


Fig. 24, Liveried Telanga

when it is usual to display toys. Such forts are also available in plenty in the markets during Diwali.

The figure of a milk-maid among the toys of Banaras and Mathura is again symbolic of the *gopi.* (Fig. 25) The Bal-Govinda, on all fours, sometimes in sitting poses with butter balls in his hands, represents the figure of the child-god Krishna. A doll with cymbals is a popular toy supposed to be an image of Mirabai, the devotee woman saint of Marwar. This conclusion is not without foundation, because images of other saints, like Tukaram with a *tanpura* or Dnyaneshwar with the *tipri,* are common. These images occupy a middle place between decorative pieces and toys. It is not uncommon in India to allow the child to include among his possessions images of saints and heroes as an encouragement to him to emulate their worthy examples.

Among unique toys must be included the *Dashavatar* sets, representing the ten *avatars* or incarnations of Vishnu (Fig. 26). These figures come from Kondapally in Andhra and are of a high artistic order. They are made of wood, beautifully chiselled and aesthetically painted. It may be mentioned here that the *Dashavatars* (ten incarnations) were popular legendary figures prior to the Christian Era, while a few of them came to be worshipped only afterwards[22].

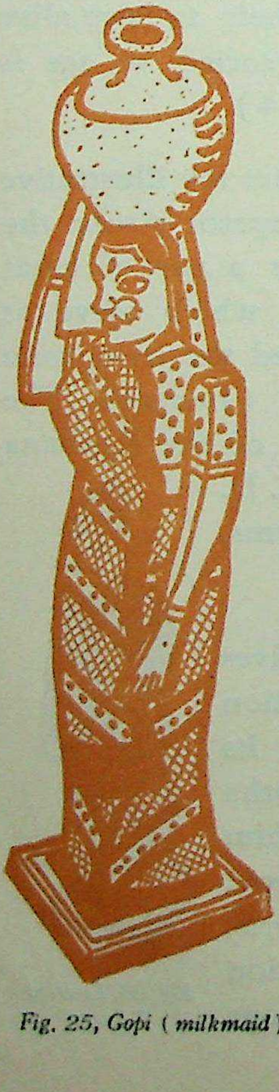


Fig. 25, Gopi (milkmaid)

These toy images, therefore, must be looked upon more as legendary than as real characters. They also possess a far-reaching value inasmuch as they help the child to become conversant with India's rich legendary lore.

The costumes, ornaments and sect marks, combined with the facial expressions and physical characteristics, make the toy figures from the several States of India a subject of absorbing interest, providing an opportunity for ethnological study. The constant interchange of such toys between the States, even when communication and transport were difficult, have kept alive mutual interest among the peoples of this vast country and thus helped to demolish provincial barriers.

Ceremonial customs are associated with certain toys. The doll's wedding used to be an ancient institution. It is now becoming rare, although about three to four decades back

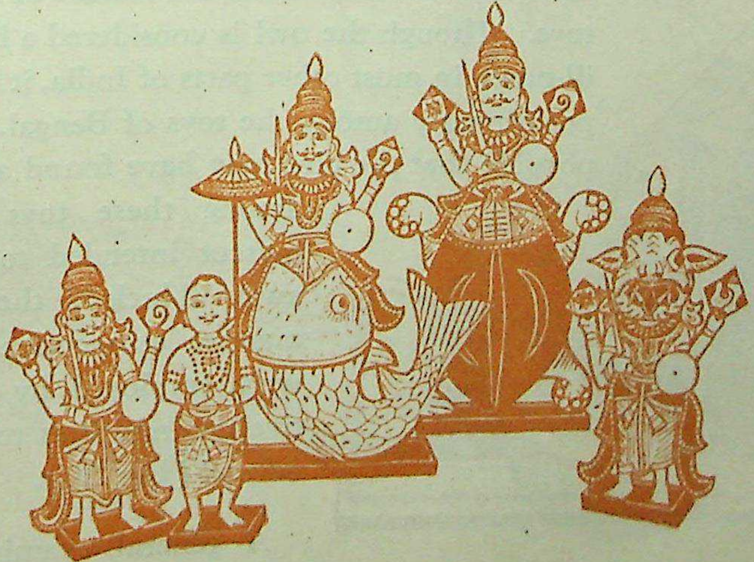


Fig. 26, Five of the Dashavatars

the celebration of a doll's wedding with *éclat* was a popular pastime with little girls in India. Adults took a hand in helping children to celebrate these mock weddings, as they also did in organizing the *bhatukali* or children's cooking party. The toys of Rajasthan include an interesting object which represents the anointing ceremony of the bride (Fig. 27).

The toys of different Indian States give an idea of the varied cults existing there. Their dominant features reveal the background and the atmosphere prevailing in those areas. Thus, in the toys of Gujarat, Kathiawar and Madhya-Bharat everything seems to revolve around the personality of Lord Krishna, while in Bengal Kalimoyee is undoubtedly the predominant influence (Fig. 28). Among the toys made in the villages one comes across representations of Manisha Devi, or the goddess of snakes, while the owl is another distinctive feature of Bengal toys. Though the owl is considered a bird of ill-omen in most other parts of India, it figures prominently among the toys of Bengal. It is possible that the bird may have found a place among these toys as a mascot intended to drive away ill-luck in the same manner as wooden dolls were employed by primitive communities to ward off evil (Fig. 29).

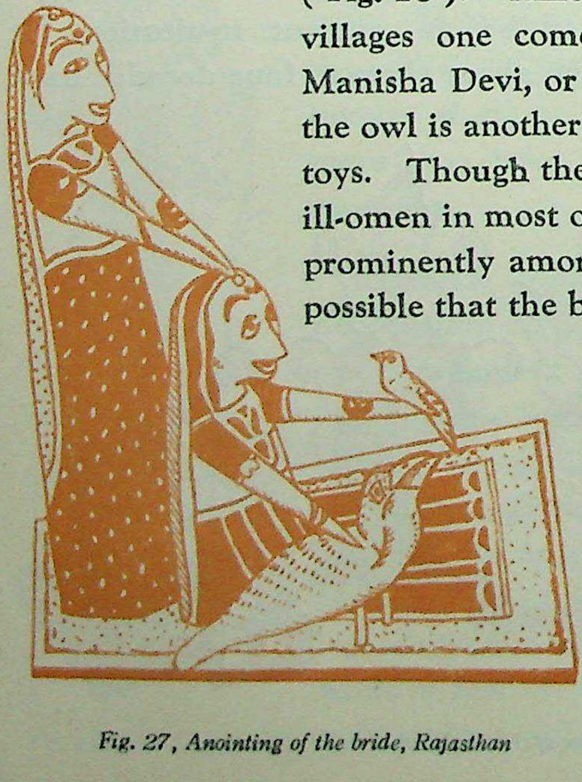


Fig. 27, Anointing of the bride, Rajasthan

A general examination of Indian handmade toys reveals a diversified cultural background covering almost every phase of Indian life. There are toys representing the day-to-day life of the people and embracing almost all the trades and professions. There are also toys which represent the *fauna* of the dense Indian forests, the birds that soar into the blue Indian skies, the vehicles of transport peculiar to each region, agricultural and industrial products, toys of archaeological and ethnological interest and toys with historical associations. In addition to these, there are toys that introduce the child to popular characters in Indian literature and to the traditional lore of India. That these delightful handmade articles have survived the flood of factory-produced articles and still continue to interest sections of the

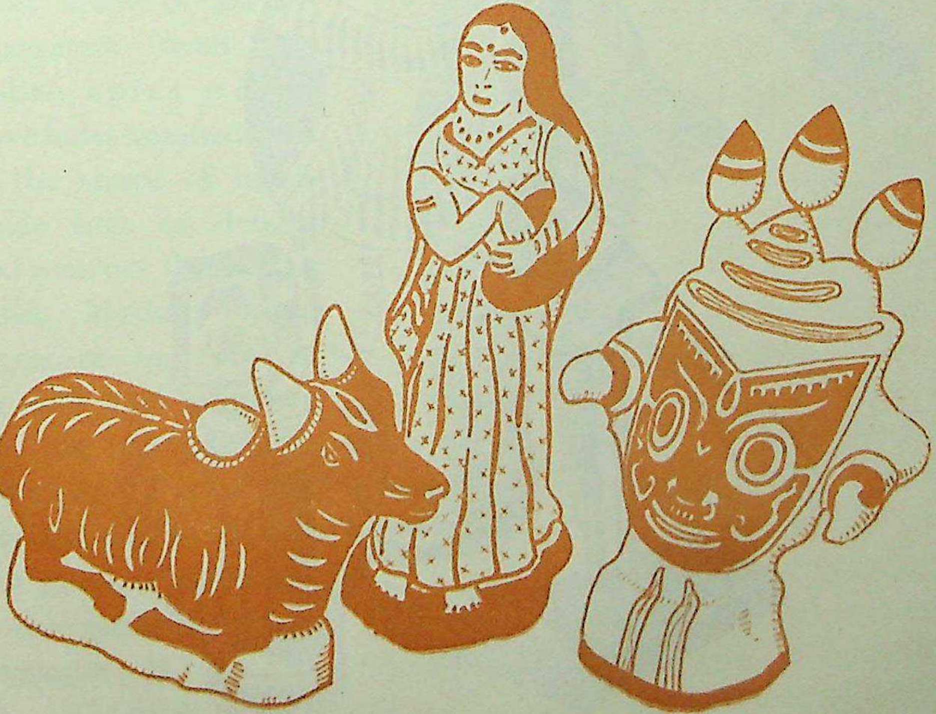


Fig. 28, Kalighat toys, Bengal

population is a significant fact. These apparently trifling objects are a part and parcel of the life of the people of the country, touching it at many points and contributing in no small measure to the enjoyment and instruction of children. At the same time, they represent life in remote villages and convey the simplicity and the charm of the unsophisticated art that flourishes there (Fig. 30).

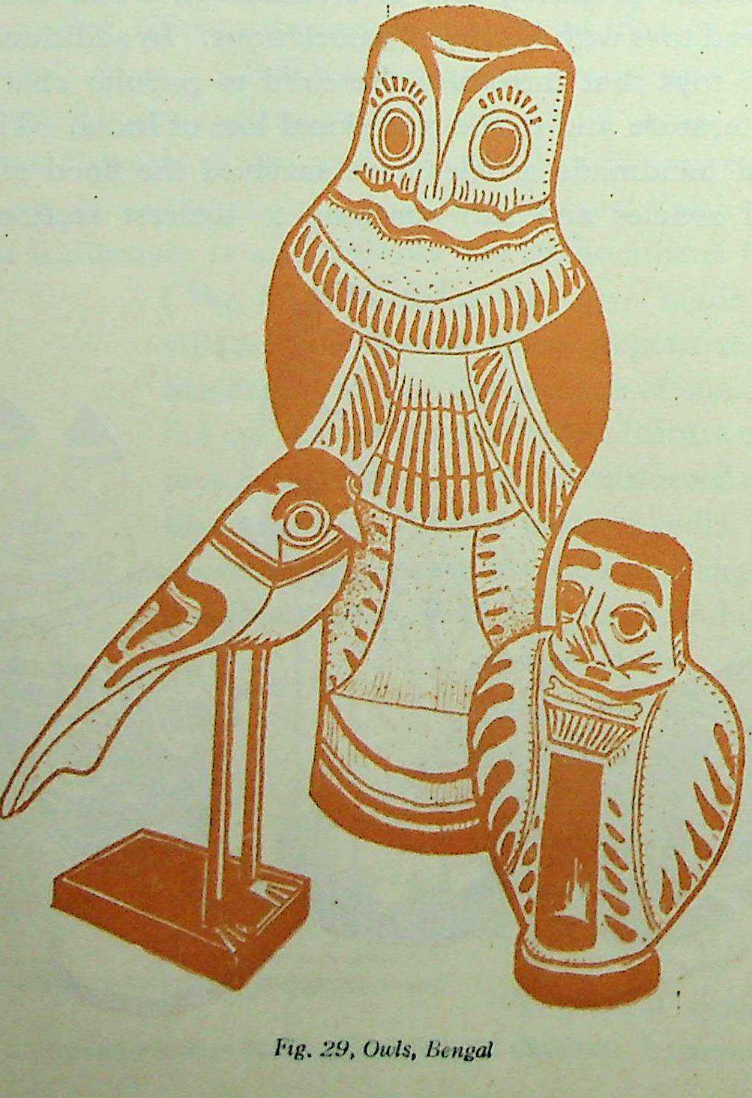


Fig. 29, Owls, Bengal

In some countries, especially in the West, the development of modern toys can be traced to the influence of nursery tales, in particular, and juvenile literature, in general. Certain well-known characters which have captured the imagination of children have been transferred from the picture or story book into toyland[23]. Mention has already been made of certain characters from the Indian epics which have been immortalized in the shape of handmade toys to delight and instruct the Indian child. Modern Indian literature has not so far had any influence on the Indian toy-world. This is, perhaps, due to the fact that juvenile literature in the modern Indian languages is yet in its infancy, as a consequence of the

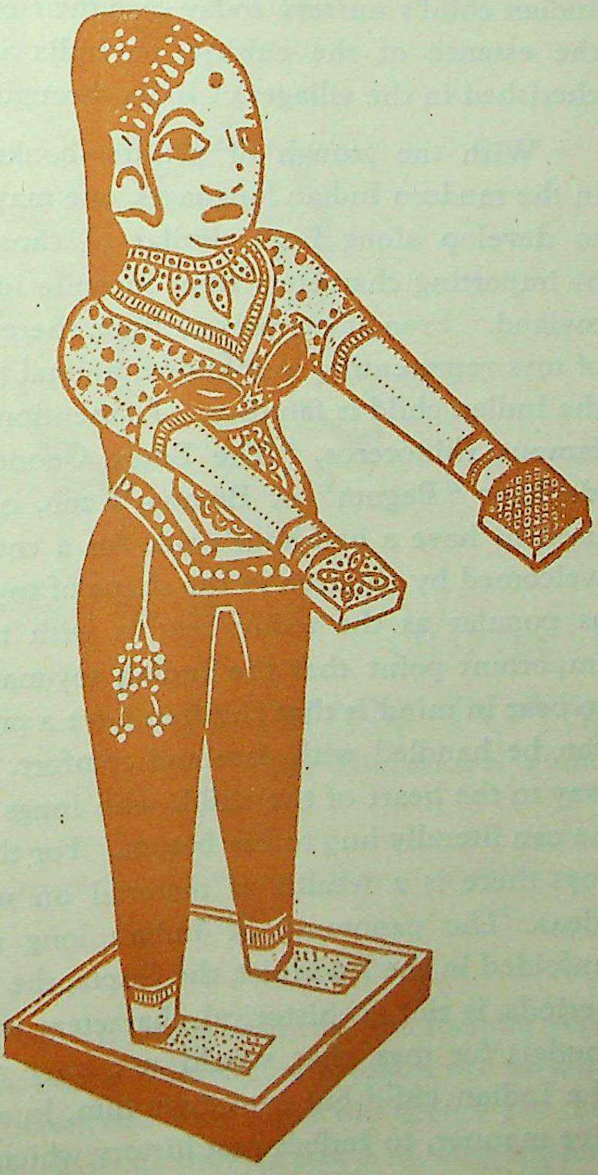


Fig. 30, Gangavati, Rajasthan

dominance of the English language in the last hundred and fifty years. Such character dolls and popular animals as people the Indian child's nursery today owe their existence to the fact that the essence of the culture of India has been retained and cherished in the villages of India throughout this period.

With the growth of picture-books and children's stories in the modern Indian languages, one may expect the toy industry to develop along lines similar to those in western countries by importing characters from juvenile literature into the Indian toyland. Even at the present time, there is scope for the creation of toys representing well-known animal 'characters' with which the Indian child is familiar. To mention two examples only, the famous rhinoceros, "The Boora Goonda" of Assam, and the elephant "Begum" of Bombay's zoo, on whose back children used to have a half-hour's ride for a couple of annas, would be welcomed by children in the shape of toys. They could become as popular as the teddy bear is with the English child. One important point that the Indian toy-maker would always have to bear in mind is that children have a preference for toys which can be handled with ease and comfort. A cuddly toy wins its way to the heart of the child, who longs to possess a toy which he can literally hug to his bosom. For the imaginative maker of toys there is a wealth of material on which to draw for new ideas. The panorama of India's long and varied history, as unfolded in the Buddhist, the Gupta, the Mogul and the Maratha periods, is rich in historical characters which provide ideas and models for toys, that would not only grip the imagination of the Indian child but introduce him, in a pleasant and unobtrusive manner, to India's past history which he will study in detail later on as part of his normal education, when he grows up.

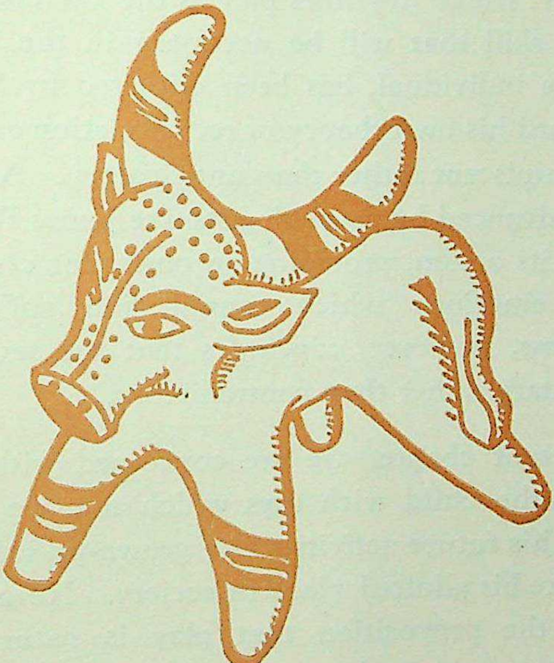


Fig. 31, Bull, Nasik

CHAPTER VI

INDIAN TOYS,

Their Educational Value

KARL Groos held that the form of play in the higher animals, including children, anticipates the serious activities of their adult lives, and illustrated his theory by the example of the kitten which in its play chases a moving object, thus training itself in the art of catching mice. The theory of biological utility, which describes play as the exercise of instincts leading to the skill that will be necessary in the future adult activities of the individual, has been criticised by Stanley Hall, who puts forward his own theory of recapitulation and maintains that play is reminiscent rather than anticipatory. A third theory has also been advanced by psychologists like James Ross that play is cathartic in its action, providing an outlet for certain pent-up instincts and emotions which cannot find sufficient direct expression. Ross, however, concludes that the several theories are complementary rather than contradictory.[24]

In the present chapter we are concerned with that aspect of the play of the child with toys which may be described as anticipatory of his future activities as a grown-up individual who will have to take his allotted place in society. No one will deny the truth of the proposition that play is nature's mode of education, in the sense of adaptation to environment.[25]

Indian handmade toys fulfil various functions besides that of providing something which will please or amuse the child and make him happy, which is no doubt their main purpose. Apart from creating for the child a small world of his own, reflecting the larger world outside with its variety of individuals and occupations, and activities in which his elders are engaged in daily life, these toys indirectly help to mould the child's personality and character. They assist the child not only in acquiring knowledge about his surroundings, his country and countrymen, but develop his social sense, so that he can grow up into a well-integrated individual.

Toys of the modern era have been scientifically classified according to the nature of the different functions they perform.

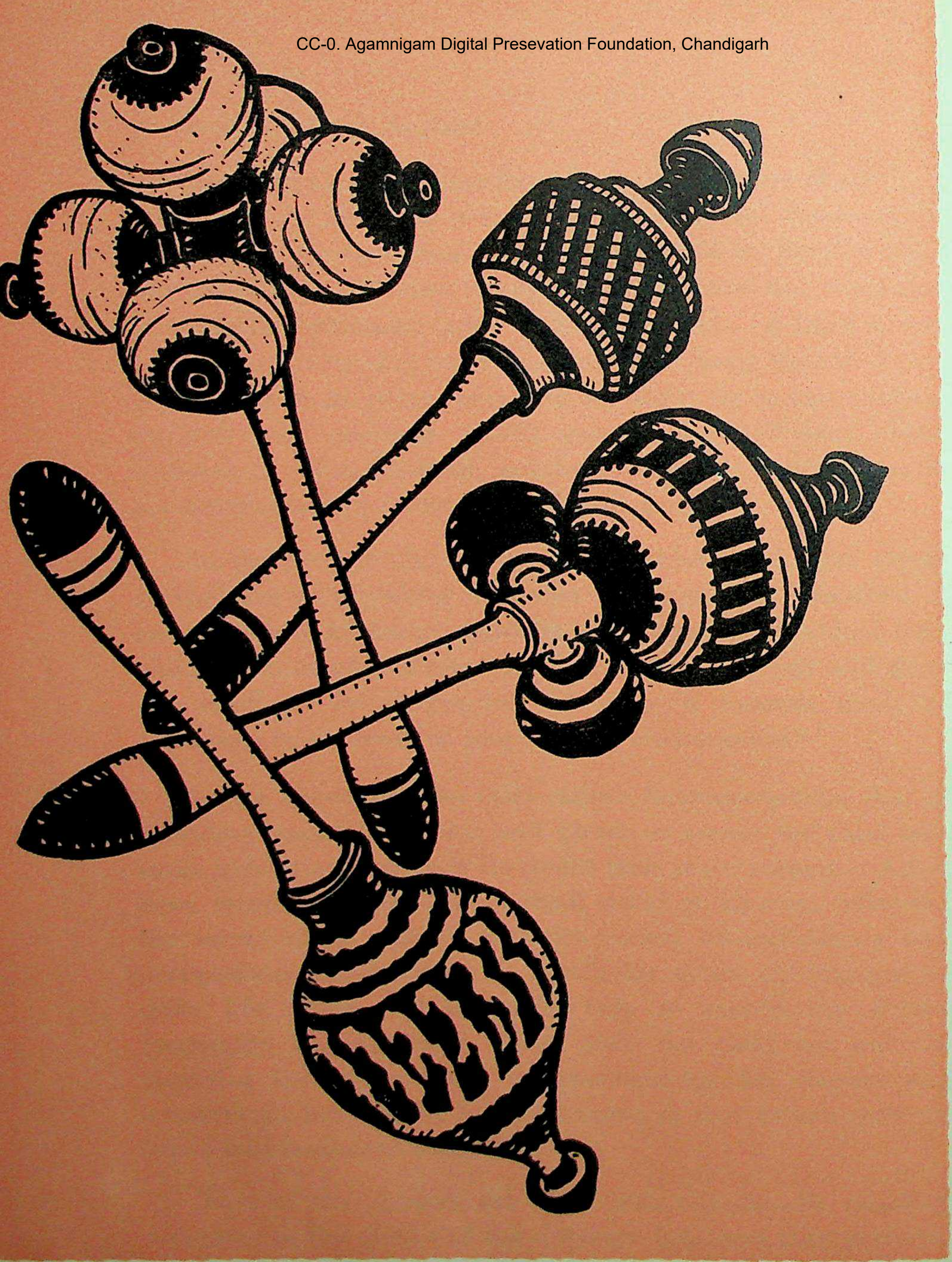
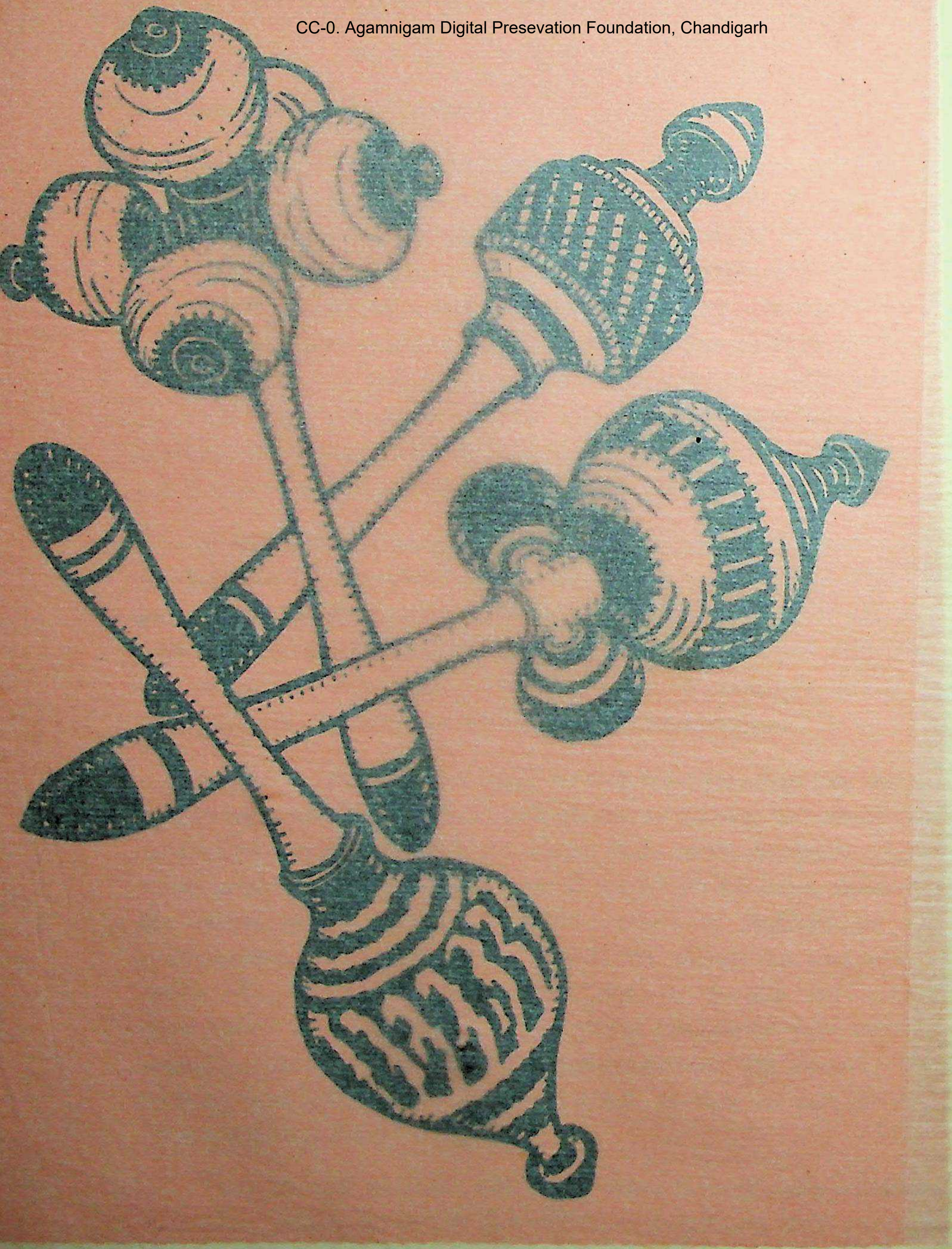


Plate III

INDIAN RATTLES

Roughly, these functions are amusement, play for developing the child's senses and muscles, cultivation of his aesthetic inclinations, the formation of character and personality and the building up of correct attitudes and relations towards his own kith and kin, his companions and the society in which he lives and moves. All these functions are important for the child in his early, impressionable years. As he grows older, the toys with which he plays provide him with greater opportunities for his creative impulses, his fancy and imagination. As he begins to associate with other children of his age, the child becomes less self-centred, and, instead of deriving pleasure from playing with his toys by himself, he prefers to share them with his companions. This desire to share his amusements with others develops in course of time into a love for games and sport which characterises the adolescent child. We may now see how far the indigenous toys, crude as they may appear when judged by modern standards, serve an educational purpose, and whether there are enough varieties to suit the different age groups.

The Indian child is introduced to toyland when, as an infant in the cradle, he first learns to fix his eyes on objects, or to prick up his ears on hearing a sound. From the cradle top it is usual to suspend small birds made of coloured cloth, balls and strips of cloth of many hues, which swing and fly about as the mother rocks the cradle to and fro. The child is thus initiated into the appreciation of colour and form just when he begins to become aware of things around him. Next in order comes the rattle, the toy that was known even to the ancient civilisations of Mohenjo-Daro, Harrappa and Greece, and continues to this day to be a source of joy to the child and relief to the mother throughout the countries of the world. In India, the rattle may



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Training the ear to sound is the next stage in the sensory development of the child, and this is done in India from a very early age. The child has opportunities of learning to appreciate various sounds and to distinguish sweet and musical notes from harsh and jarring sounds. Children are fond of dropping articles or striking them against objects. By such attempts the child accustoms himself to thuds, bangs and sharp noises, enjoying some of them and disapproving of others. Rattles satisfy his sense of hearing and train his ear to the reception of sounds, good and bad. Rattles in India being of many types of material give a wide range to the mother to make a selection from, on the basis of their educative value (Plate III).

When the child has accustomed himself to colour, form and sound he reaches out for more interesting things. He soon tires of forms of inanimate objects and instinctively seeks forms of animals, birds and human beings as his companions. He thus satisfies his emotional needs and adjusts himself to his surroundings. This is really a preparation for his future rôle as a member of his family and of society. It is the duty of his parents to help him to progress in this direction by giving him toys which would assist him not only to appreciate form, colour and sound, but familiarize him with domestic animals, on which children are known to lavish their affection and which become their favourites in no time. Toys representing the cow, the dog, the horse (Fig. 32), the parrot, the hen and the sparrow, which he sees around him every day, would provide a suitable addition to his collection of playthings.

Small, painted figures of wood representing domesticated animals such as dogs, horses and cats become his playthings when the child begins to turn on his side and crawl about on all fours. By and by, animals which he does not see around him daily but about which he should acquire some knowledge are added to his collection of toys. The elephant, which is a popular animal in India, deer, tigers, lions, camels and other species of animals to be found in the zoo are included among his toy animals, and he soon learns to distinguish these animals from one another (Fig. 33). These toy animals are usually made of light wood or papier-maché and are painted so that they may not present a rough surface, and the child can handle them with ease. He is mightily pleased with the bright colours and decorations which add to the attraction of these toys.

Next to these come toys on wheels in the form of horses, other animals and birds which accompany the toddler wherever he goes (Fig. 34 and Plate IV). The idea of mobility having now dawned on the child, he likes to have things which will move, things which he can push or pull, things which spin

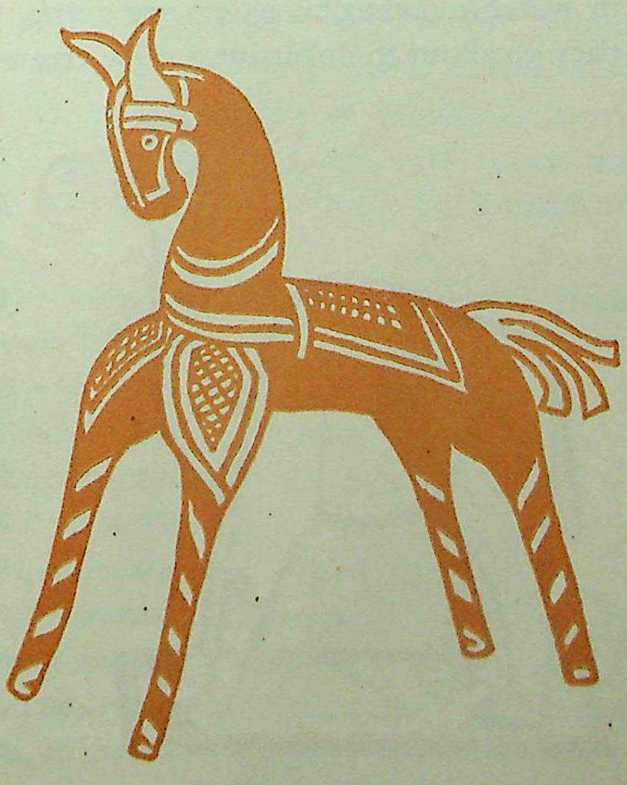


Fig. 32, Horse, Rajasthan

or revolve, which balance or which have some little mechanical device making the toy nod or move some limb. For some time the child is content with these things, as he has by this time a variety of articles to interest him. However, very soon the idea of imitating his elders comes to the child. This is the time when he desires things which will help him to train his muscles by some activity and enable him also to learn to distinguish sizes and weights. Nests of bowls, boxes in lacquered ware and articles made of different materials provide him with an ample choice of useful toys. Utensils and vehicles also attract his fancy.

Once the child begins to play by himself and to take interest in watching what his elders are doing, he starts imitating them as they go about their business. He creates a small world of his own. Among other toys with a distinctive educational value, suited to the age when the child learns to play by himself, may be mentioned the vocational groups which cover a very wide range. These groups include sets of artizans and craftsmen, common people in petty trades and entertainers such as snake-charmers magicians, jugglers, acrobats and clowns. These toys are very popular with

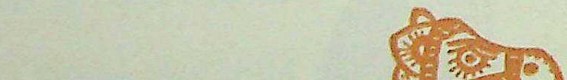


Fig. 33, Camel, Madras State

children and make a useful collection of subjects from the educational point of view also. Groups of figures of musicians with different kinds of musical instruments, making an orchestral set, find a place in such collections.

This is also the age at which the child, if a girl, plays at housekeeping with miniatures of household articles such as furniture and utensils (Fig. 35) The play way of modern education has not been lost sight of in the life of the Indian child. The popular play at 'cooking,' termed *Bhatukali* in Maharashtra, which is also prevalent in other parts of India, initiates the girl into household work and teaches her self-reliance. Such cooking parties are common when children gather in groups and organize a miniature tea or dinner party. The children receive guidance from their elders who teach them to prepare a variety of eatables in miniature form. The children help in serving and cleaning up, and enjoy the parties thoroughly, and at the same time learn to work together in a team.

The preparation of articles without any assistance from elders is not unknown to Indian children. Small articles of clay such as pots and pans and bricks are made by children, while corn stalks and the pith it contains provide scope for the village children to make a number of things of an interesting character. They prepare almost anything out of this material, from a flute cut out of a reed to carts, houses and the like. A type of raffia

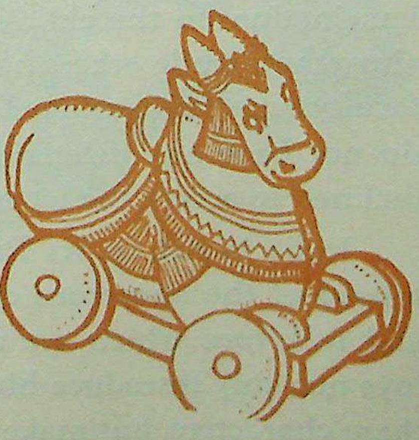


Fig. 34, Basava (bull), Karnatak, Bombay State work, in which weeds are used, enables children to do a number of things.

Boys of the same age play with miniature farm and garden implements such as spades, pickaxes and watering cans, whip-tops and hoops. Toys which help him to imitate the activities of his elders attract him. What these are depends on his environment and the standard of life of the family. The city child, accustomed to comfort and luxury in moving about from place to place, fancies toy cars, buses and railway trains. Modern factory made toys are constructed with the object of directing the child's growing mind into suitable channels of creative activity. They familiarize him with the modern gadgets which add to the comfort and conveniences of city life.

When he is about six years of age, the child loves to dwell in imagination in regions of mystery and wonder. He longs to listen to stories of heroes and giants. This is the age when the juvenile mind is apt to flit from the world of fact to the world of fancy, and *vice versa*. There is a divided opinion among educationists about the influence of tales of mystery and imagination on the child's mind. Some would ban such stories altogether, while others hold the view that the child's imaginative faculty must be developed by means of such stories and that they do not have any deleterious effect on his mind. The writer is inclined to accept the latter view.

India is rich in its *Puranic* lore. The miniature representations of the numerous characters in the Indian epics, *Puranas*, and folk lore which are available to the child in the shape of toys not only introduce him to the legendary lore woven around these characters, but make a lasting impression upon his mind of the moral teaching that is invariably connected with it. The

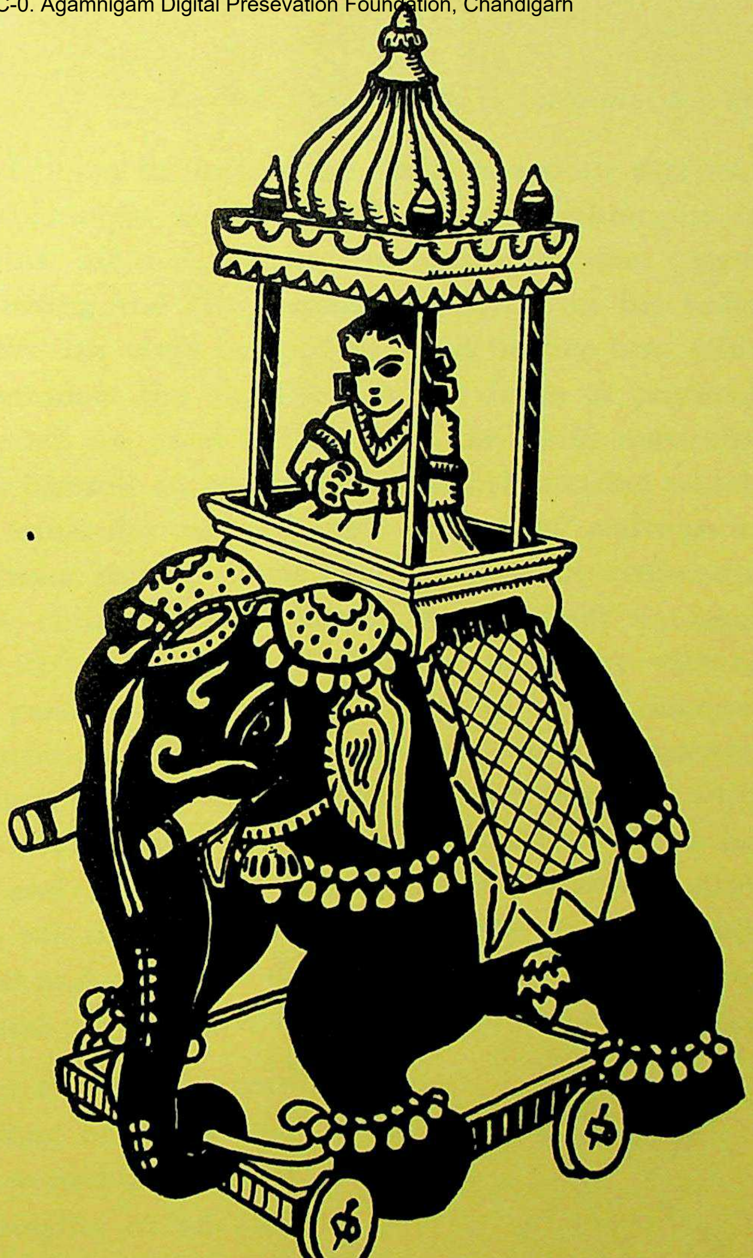
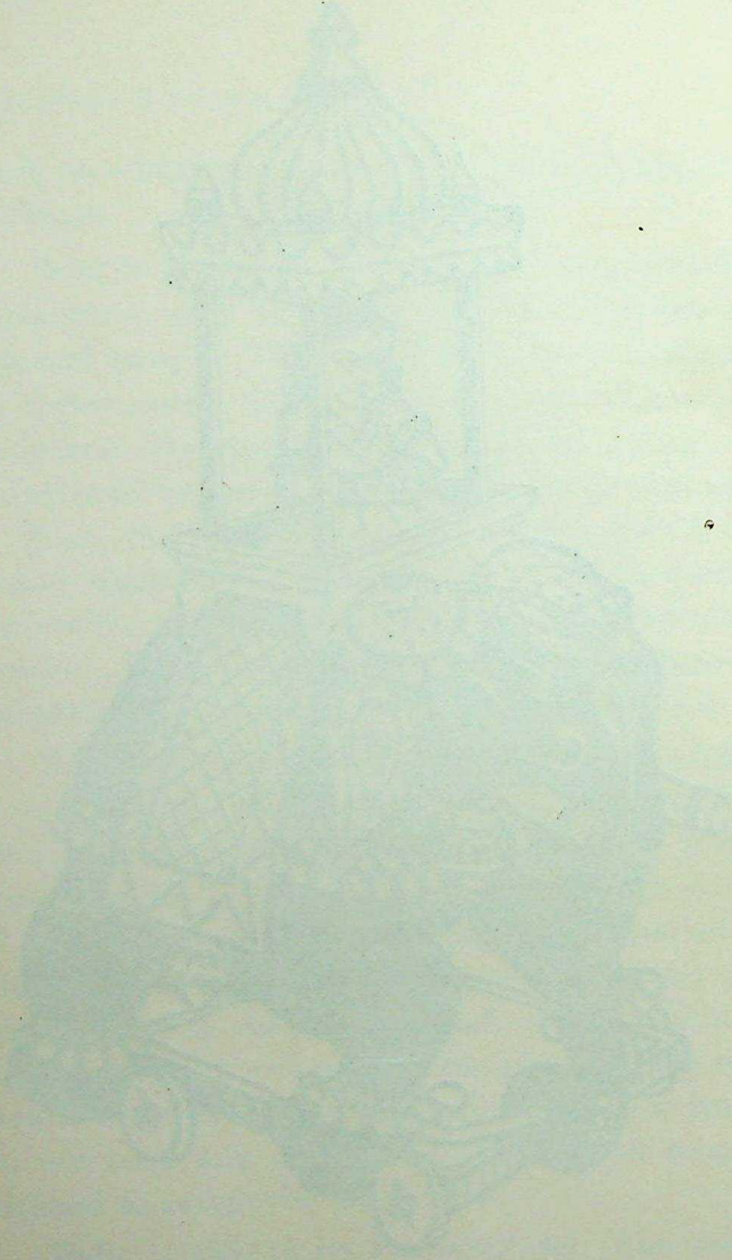


PLATE IV

SAURASHTRA ELEPHANT



child admires and hopes to imitate the deeds of valour ascribed to some of the characters in the Indian epics to whom he is introduced in this manner. Thus, for example, the figure of Sri Krishna lifting the Goverdhan mountain on his little finger serves to fire his vivid imagination and inspire him with the ambition to emulate the child-god in his deeds of physical prowess. With such an ideal before him, the child naturally begins to interest himself in sports and physical exercise which will develop his muscular strength and powers of endurance. The images of Rama and his loyal brother Laxman evoke the admiration of the child for these heroes of the great national epic who are described as living embodiments of the virtues of obedience to parents and brotherly affection, and unconsciously assist in moulding his conduct towards his own parents, brothers and sisters. Every Indian child being familiar with the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which he has heard again and again from the lips of his mother, aunt or grandmother, playing with these toys helps to fix in his mind the incidents and morals of the stories so that they become, as it were, a part and parcel of the child's own life and experience.

Children do not ordinarily care for a highly finished or costly toy. They ask for something which represents a personality or an idea with force and vigour, no matter how crudely, for anything that may be lacking in its artistic value or suggestiveness is supplied by their lively imagination (Fig. 36). One could not think of a better

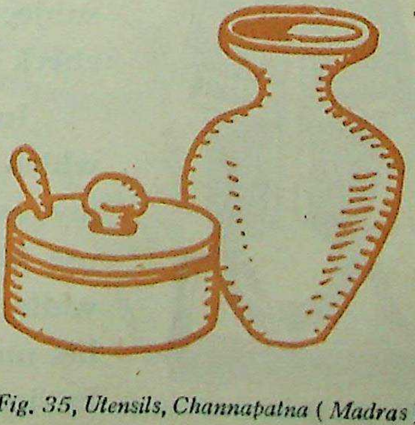


Fig. 35, Utensils, Channapatna (Madras) introduction of the child to the two great Indian epics with their rich store of religious traditions, which are an integral part of the civilization and way of life that are essentially Indian, than through these colourful toys which serve the same purpose as coloured illustrations in the story books read by the European or American child, and perhaps with greater effect, because the child can handle and dispose the toys to suit his fancy, while pictures are immobile.

It should be mentioned here that a child playing with toys representing religious personalities or characters learns to handle them with great care because of the reverence and respect which they evoke in his mind. This by itself is of considerable value as a discipline, at a period in the life of the child when he is prone to indulge in acts of destruction. There is a view that it is undesirable to give flimsy toys to children, because they are likely to provoke the destructive tendency which children disclose. The religious subject-matter of toys acts as a powerful check on this tendency.

Indigenous Indian toys, other than those which are imitations of western models, do not, as a rule, assist in training the child to use his muscles or his manipulative skill, while they, no doubt, help him to develop his mental, emotional and moral faculties by influencing his imagination. In other

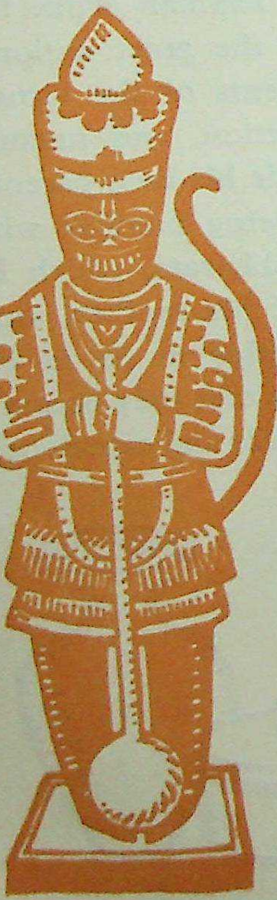


Fig. 36, Hanuman, Banaras

words, their influence is subjective rather than objective. This is, perhaps, to be explained by the fact that thought and contemplation rather than action are typical of the Indian temperament. Mention must, however, be made here of balancing dolls, such as those of Tanjore, and others which go into action as a result of a mere jerk or the pulling of a string. Lever-action toys, in particular, are believed to have originated in Asia, especially in China, India and Burma.[26] They are popular with children, who derive endless fun from watching their jerky movements.

Mechanical and factory-produced toys have not been dealt with in detail or illustrated in this book, which is mainly concerned with handmade, folk toys. Factory-produced toys, no doubt, play a part of their own, being useful in developing qualities such as skill in manipulation and physical activity. Such toys are of many

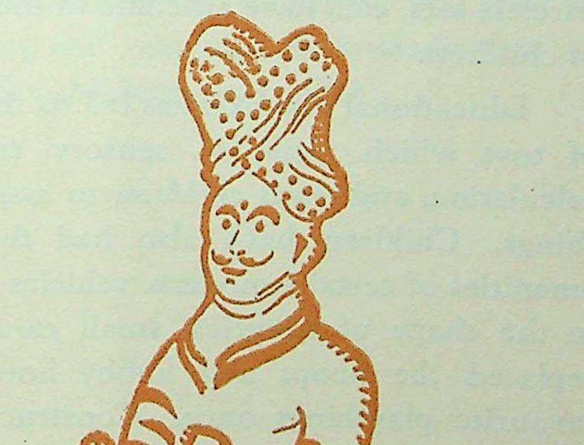


Fig. 37, Horse and rider, Indore

varieties, and represent most of the landmarks of scientific invention. The evolution of toys shows that every invention has led to the manufacture of new types of toys. It is said that the Montgolfier brothers' going up in an air balloon in 1783 A. D. brought into the market toy balloons galore. Similarly, diminutive railway trains, submarines, aeroplanes, wireless sets, etc., have all come in their turn to be the playthings of children.

Educational research has led to the production of a number of toys which assist in sensory training and mathematical calculation, and teach children to acquire skill in doing various things. Children have also had the benefit of enjoying the amenities of certain modern vehicles in their own small world, in the shape of tricycles, small cars and scooters which have replaced the hoops and hobby horses that used to be their favourite playthings once. Construction sets of different kinds for erecting houses, bridges, cranes, etc., enable the child to do things on his own initiative and help him to learn about man's progress in engineering. The snag, however, is that models of destruction such as toy battleships, cruisers, tanks, gun-carriages, torpedoes and bombers make their way into the nursery. It is desirable to exclude these symbols of war from the child's nursery. An attempt should be made by a careful selection of toys which have a real educative value to make him aware of the extent of scientific progress and at the same time train him to appreciate the higher values of life.

In a letter addressed by her recently to the Editor of the Times Literary Supplement[27], Beatrice King mentions Zagorsk, near Moscov, where an institute for research on toys exists. In the list of models she mentions as having been submitted for production by this Institute were working models of airports, railway junctions, hydro-electric power stations, tractors, harvesters and the like. No one will question the instructional value of such models. It is necessary to take every precaution to prevent toys from reflecting the swaying passions of an excited and disgruntled humanity, or the horrors associated with warfare, for, if such passions and horrors find their way into the sunny lives of children, they will only cast dark shadows which will go on lengthening as the children grow older.

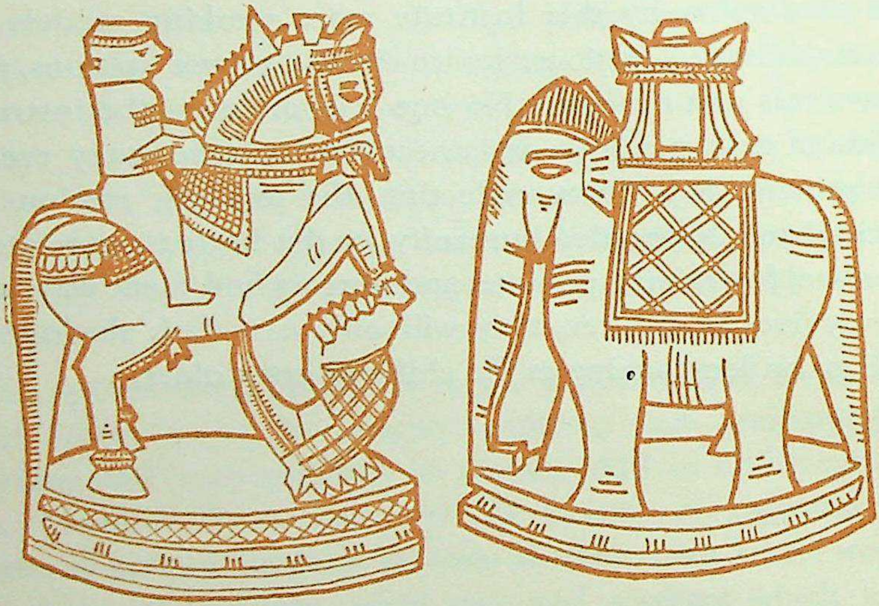


Fig. 38, Sinhachala horse, Vishakhapatna, and Elephant, Madras

CHAPTER VII

TOYS

In The Indian Market

In most countries the display and sale of toys on a large scale take place as an adjunct of festivals which provide occasions for religious gatherings, worship and rejoicing. India is no exception to this rule. The celebration of important festivals in different parts of the country naturally affords an opportunity to the craftsmen to dispose of the wares of their trade. They bring from their villages, far and near, to the cities and places of pilgrimage the toys they have made in order to display them to the best advantage possible before large crowds of visitors.

During most festivals, and on certain fixed days of the Indian calendar, fairs are held in different parts of India. At these fairs people from different parts of the country congregate along with their children, and when returning home they take souvenirs in the shape of toys for their little ones. Such fairs are regular markets for the sale of all kinds of goods, especially colourful, handmade toys. Visits to the annual *jatras* or *melas* (fairs) held during religious festivals are events in the life of the Indian child to which he looks forward with eager expectation on account of the opportunity it gives him of seeing large assortments of toys coming from different parts of the country. Every time he returns from such a fair he carries home some more toys to play with, for these fairs provide occasions for presents from parents and relations, as Christmas does for the Christian child. The temple-squares in national centres of pilgrimage like Allahabad, Banaras, Gaya, Puri, Mathura, Tirupathi, Madurai, Rameshwar and Nasik provide convenient spots for the holding of fairs. In fact, in these temple-squares large assortments of handmade toys are available for sale throughout the year. Factory-produced, modern toys can be had

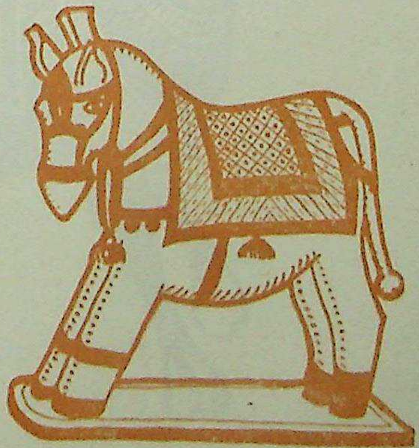


Fig. 39, Horse, Banaras

in bazaars all over the country. Yet one more place where such toys are displayed for sale is the railway junction, where trains halt for long periods and hawkers get plenty of opportunities to tackle passengers wanting something or other to beguile their time during the tedious wait for a connecting train.

Indian toys on the market are of many types. They are made of raw material easily available in the region, such as clay, light yellow or red wood (Fig. 38), soft stone of light and dark shades, papier-maché, cotton, pith, straw, shells and metal. Papier-maché (Figs. 40, 41), wooden and cotton toys are by far the most convenient for children to handle, although the first two varieties can be very fragile. Some of the toys are in the original colour of the material of which they are made, such as yellow or red wood or soapstone, while most of them are either painted, lacquered or decorated in some manner. Articles of ivory, metal, semi-precious stones, sandal wood and other costly material, which do not strictly fall in the category of toys, but can be classified as curios, have not

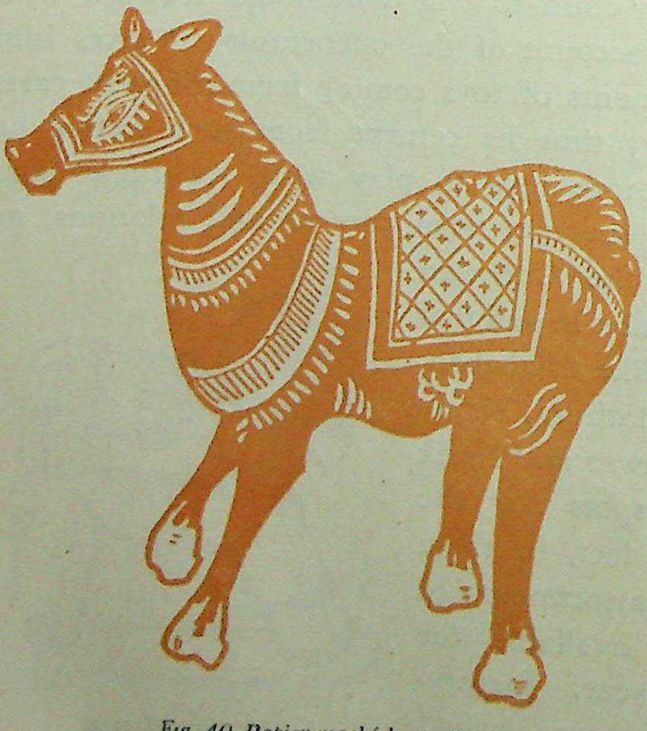


Fig. 40, Papier-maché horse, Orissa

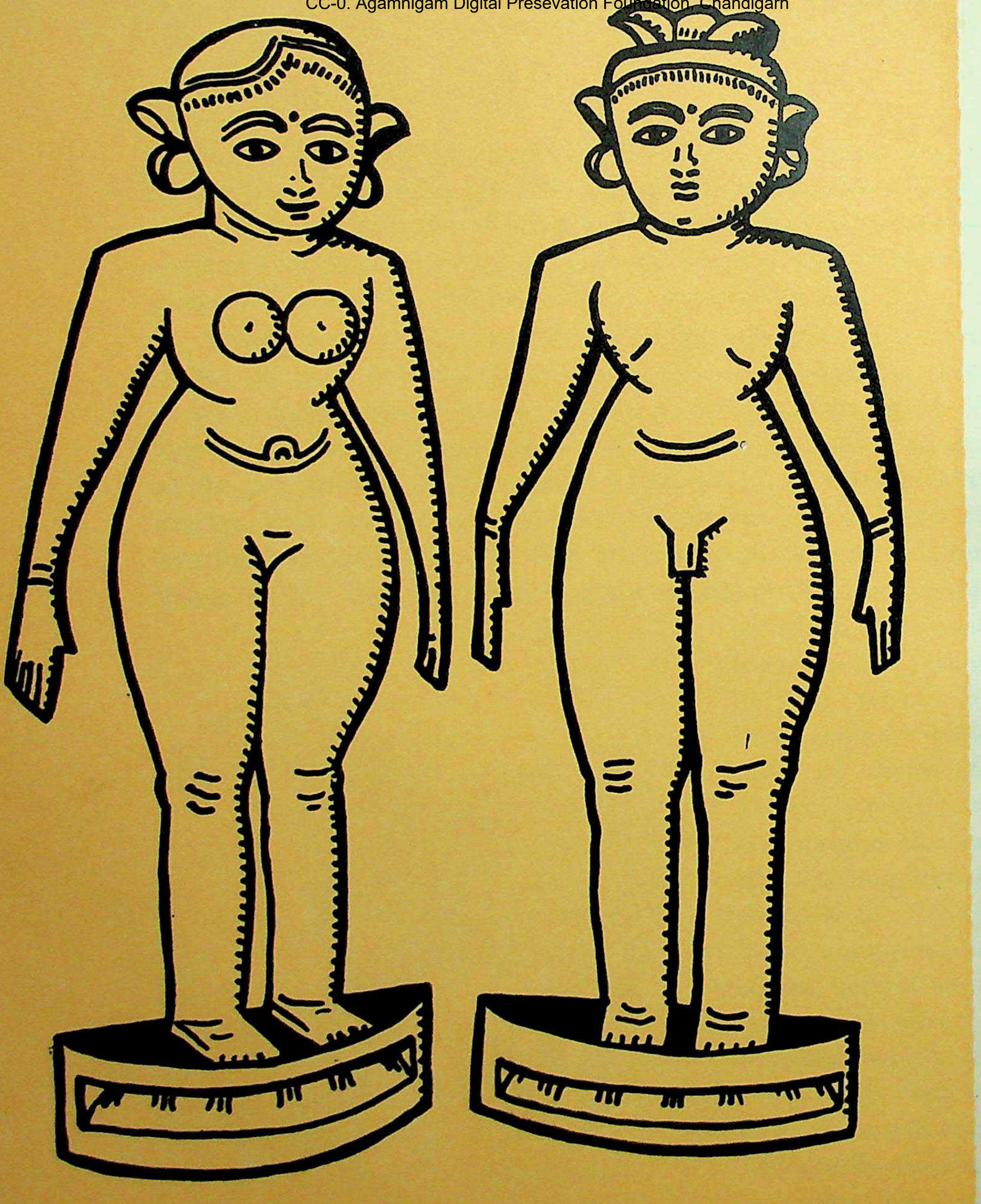


PLATE V

WOODEN DOLLS

South India

been dealt with in this book, since we are here mainly concerned with the playthings of children.

Indian handmade toys cover many aspects of Indian life. They range from petty traders to divine or mythological characters. They also portray vividly and in a remarkable manner the costumes, ornaments and sect marks that once differentiated sections of Indian society. This is so, because the unsophisticated toy maker still lives in a world remote from ours which is composed of diverse and extraneous elements foreign to the Indian way of life.

Terra cotta figures and toys are found throughout India. Wherever the potter's wheel turns to produce objects of art or utility, a small trade in *terra cotta* toys exists as a subsidiary occupation (Fig. 42). It is the tradition of the Indian potter to make miniature models of his products. Hence the special significance and sentiment attached to the *terra cotta* toy. New models are produced for festive occasions. These figures of clay have much in common with the ancient figures of Mohenjo –Daro and Harappa, and bear a striking resemblance to them in form and construction. They are plain in appearance and yet

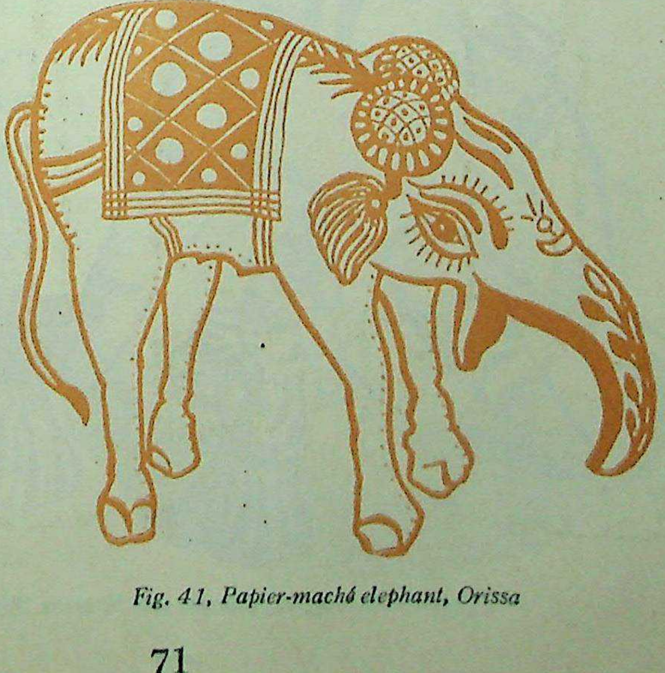


Fig. 41, Papier-maché elephant, Orissa possess a marked individuality. This is a point worth noting about handmade toys in general. The character of the craftsman stands revealed in the work he creates. Every handmade toy, therefore, has an individuality which influences the child and wields an almost uncanny power over him.

One aspect of toys should not be passed over, and that is the similarity of idea and the common expression of thought and fancy occurring in different races and communities of men, far removed from one another in space and time. Thus, among the *terra cottas* of Mohenjo-Daro are figures of bulky women. Bengal has its Alhadi, the famous fat and silly old woman in high glee (Figs. 43 & 44). China has its fat and laughing mandarin,

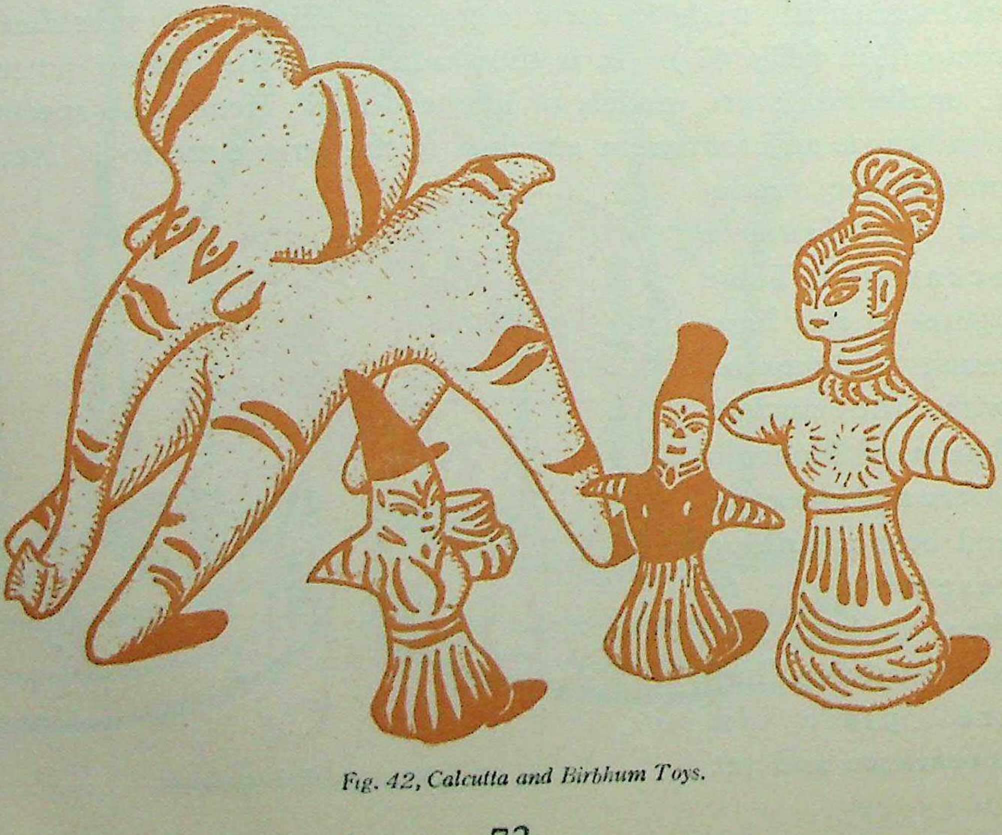


Fig. 42, Calcutta and Birbhum Toys.

while among the ancient relics of Pataliputra is the figure of the laughing boy.

Animals and birds figure prominently among Indian handmade toys. They are brilliantly coloured and come very near to nature. Domesticated animals like dogs, cows, calves and horses, and birds like peacocks and parrots, as well as the wilder denizens of the Indian forests, are abundant. Other animals employed in certain regions as a means of transport or heavy labour, such as the horse and camel in Rajasthan and the elephant in South India, figure among the toys of the respective regions. Similarly, transport vehicles, typical of different parts of India, such as *tongas, jatkas,* carts (Fig. 45), *shikaras* and house-boats, are available in those parts. Toy chariots are rare nowadays, having been superseded by modern conveyances like cars and buses, although one occasionally comes across chariots in ivory or wood. Objects such as birds and boats made of shells from the coastal districts of South India are to be commonly

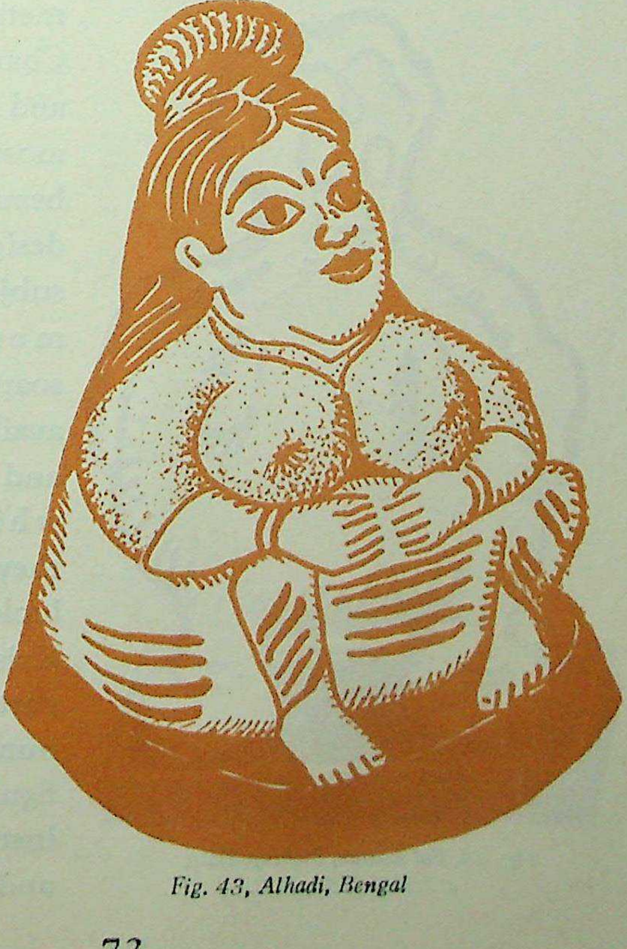


Fig. 43, Alhadi, Bengal

met with, while Hyderabad (Deccan) produces small tea sets and kitchen utensils made out of areca nuts.

Models of almost all kinds of Indian fruit and vegetables, closely resembling the natural products, can be found among the painted wooden toys of Gokak and Savantwadi. Lucknow also is a great centre for toy fruits, vegetables, birds and miniature human figures, but they are mostly made of clay. They are elegant and, at the same time, very fragile. Kitchen and household utensils, which are fascinating to children, especially girls, are made of various materials, from clay to metal (Fig. 46), but the Channapatna or Madras and Mysore sets are the most popular. They are beautifully coloured and designed and include many subjects. Models of monuments and temples in soapstone and marble are available in Madhya Bharat and Uttar Pradesh (Fig. 47), while in Tirucharapalli they are made of pith and look as if they were of ivory. Krishnagar, in Bengal, particularly, produces a number of toys: human figures playing musical instruments, dolls, animals and the like. From

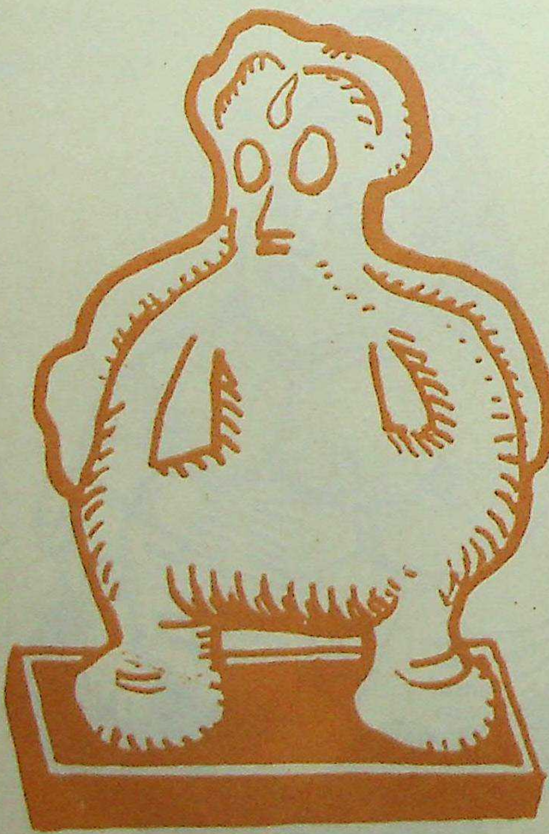


Fig. 44, Fat woman, Mohenjo-Daro, c. 3500–2750, B. C.

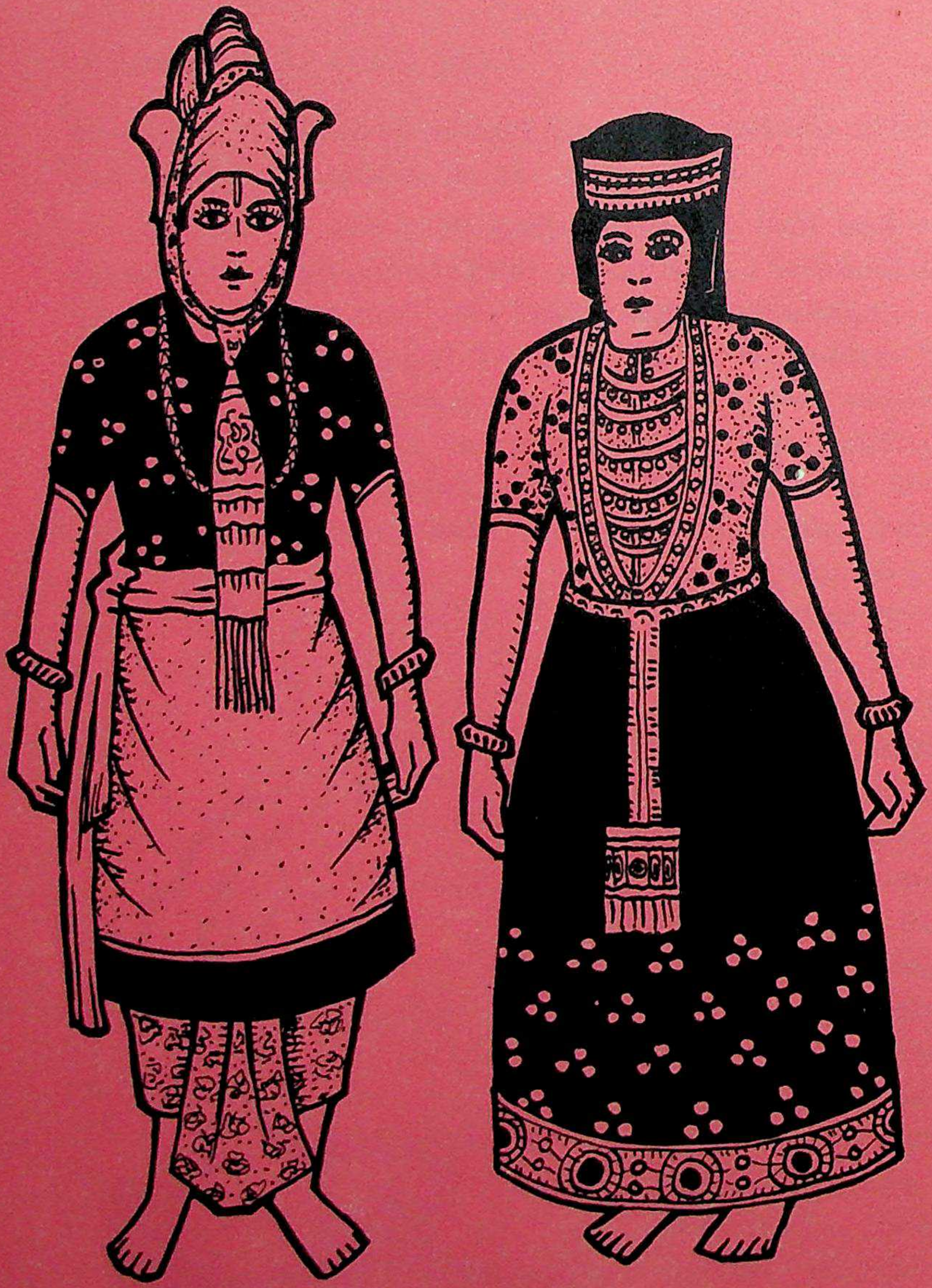


PLATE VI

DANCERS

Manipur

Manipur, in Assam, come toy dancers dressed in red and green (Plate VI), with feathers for ornaments and marks on the forehead resembling the sect marks of South India.

The toys of Kondapalli, near Vijayawada, deserve special mention. From the point of view of workmanship and artistry they excel most of the other Indian toys. They are made of wood and cover a number of subjects such as artisans, toddy-tappers and elephants with their *howdahs* (Frontispiece). Among cities and States noted for their special make of toys are Lucknow, Banaras, Calcutta, Krishnagar, Berhampore, Murshidabad, Agra, Madras, Mysore, Orissa, Gokak, Savantwadi, Kondapalli, Tirucharapalli, Travancore, Nasik and Mathura.

A general idea has been given above of the famous centres of the toy industry in India, or rather the cities by the names

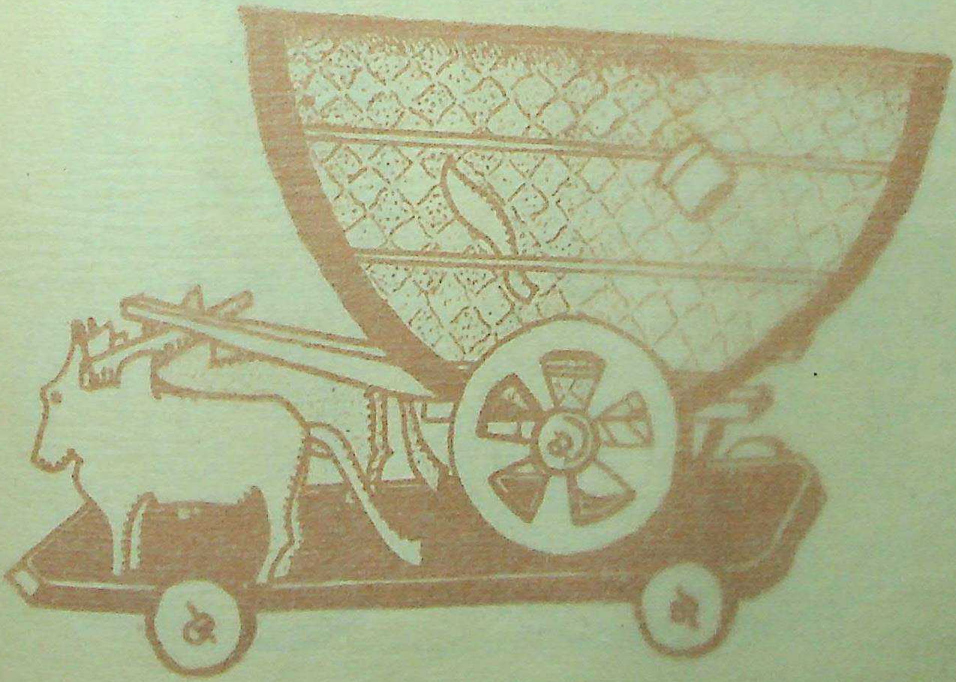
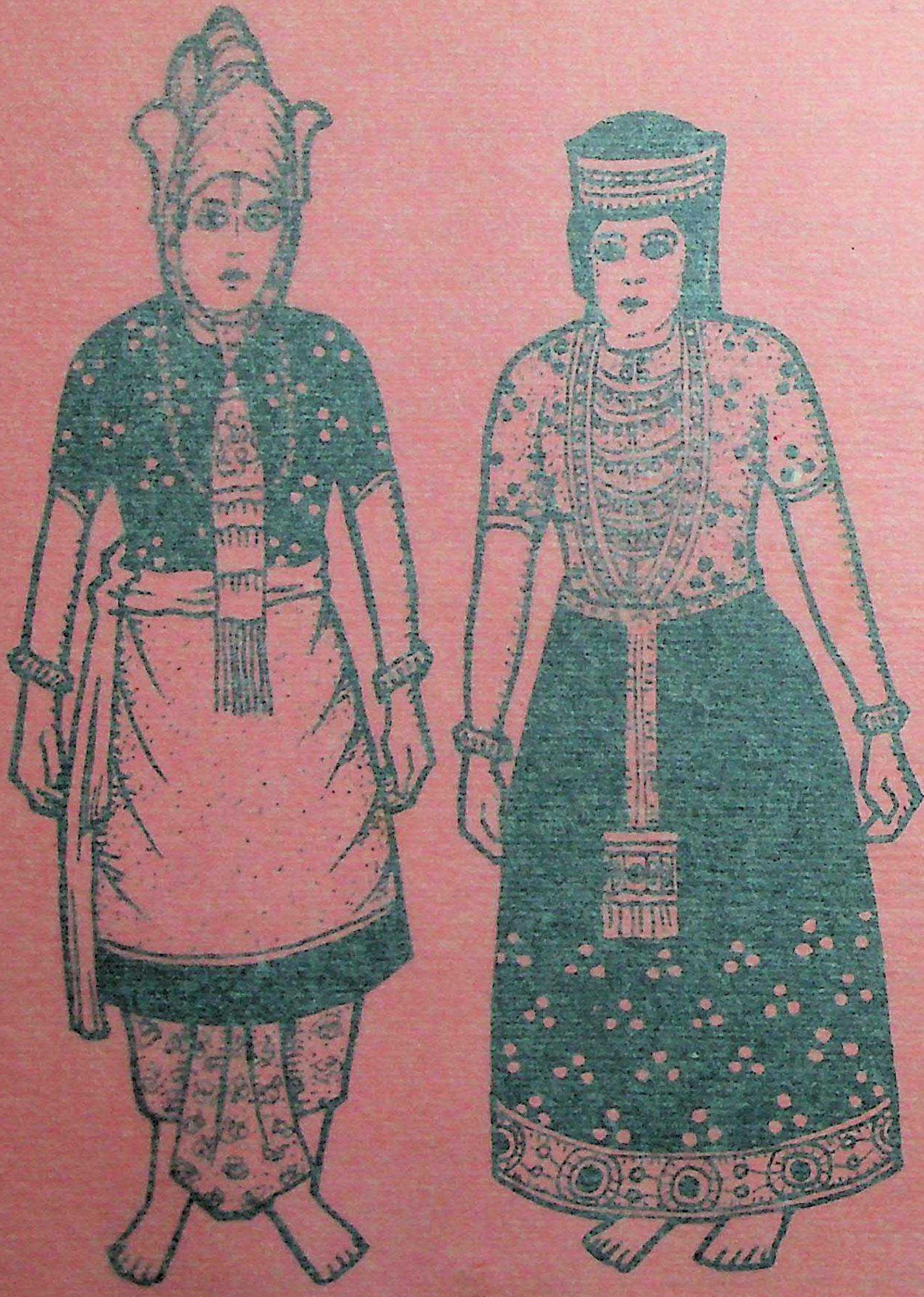


Fig. 46, Cart, South India



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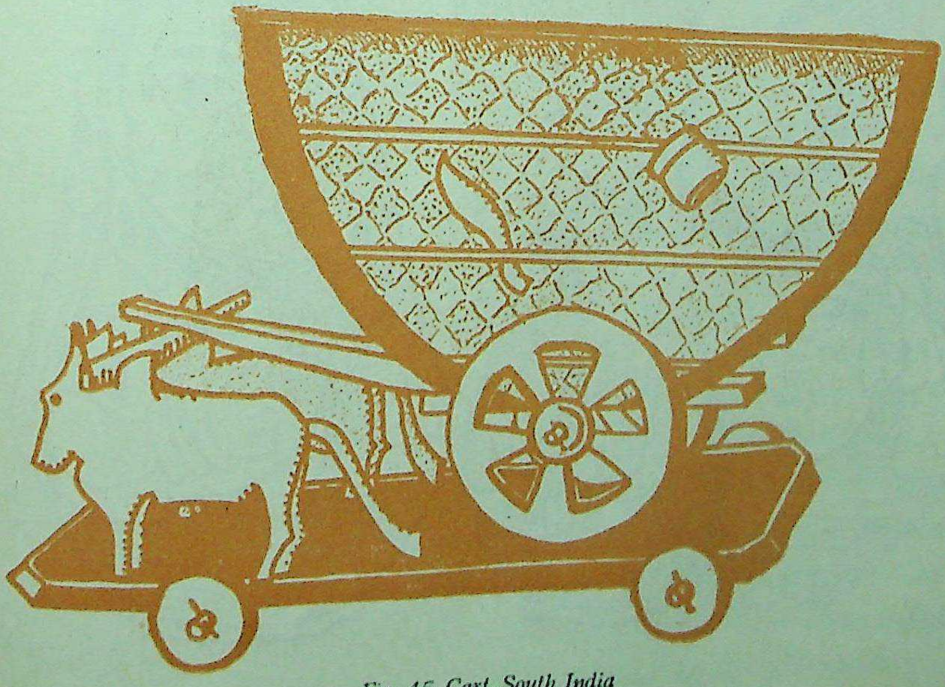

Fig. 45, Cart, South India

of which certain toys are known, even though they may have been manufactured in villages in the neighbourhood of such cities. It would be interesting to follow the development of the toy trade in the different regions of India. It has already been mentioned that, not only in this country but all over the world, the production of toys has depended on the raw materials available in the area. In India, one finds that in regions like Rajasthan handmade toys are made at the present time of *papier-maché* and cloth, while in the northern belt of Uttar Pradesh up to Bengal, where river clay is plentiful, the toys are moulded from this soft substance. The toys of Madhya Bharat are both of wood and soft stone, while the

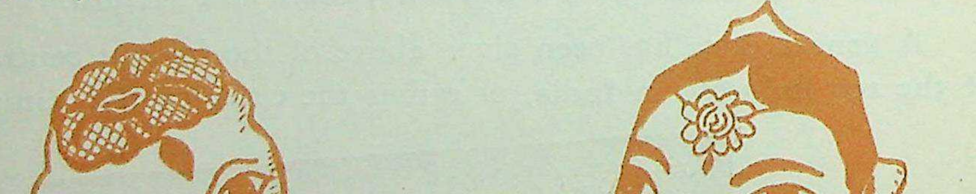

Fig. 46, Papier-maché tumblers, Rajasthan eastern zone extending to the extreme south of India is noted for articles of yellow, red, and sandal wood.

The following regions are known for their typically oriental toys: Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madras and Mysore. Certain parts of Bombay, Rajasthan and Saurashtra also produce lovely articles. Looking at a map of India, it would appear that the development of the toy trade, if represented pictorially, would assume the shape of a huge horse-shoe covering the eastern portion of India. National places of pilgrimage have, it seems, given a fillip to the craft because of the traffic flowing to and from these places. The characteristic features of the toys have remained unchanged, and the unity of Indian culture and the continuity of age-long traditions have been maintained through the instrumentality of these apparently insignificant objects devised for the amusement and play of children.

Besides the small-scale industries in villages and small towns, which are responsible for the production of the different classes of toys mentioned earlier, there are a number of institutions and individuals who make toys for the city bazaars. Among these toys the Bharatpur dolls rank high, since they are of the cuddly type as well as typically Indian in character. No reference has been made in this study to those toys which are based on foreign models or subjects, as the main purpose of this book is to deal with Indian toys. Numerous handmade toys available in the city markets, indicating a foreign influence, have therefore been excluded.

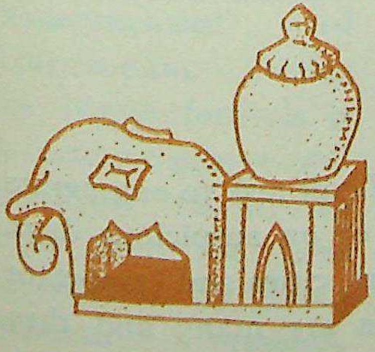

Fig. 47, Soapstone toy, Madhya Bharat

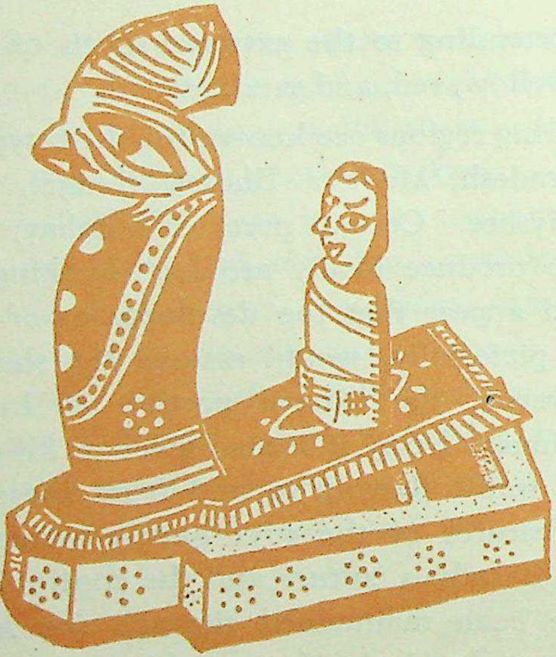

Fig. 48, Box, Rajasthan

CHAPTER VIII

FESTIVALS

And Sentiments

It would be a difficult task to enumerate the fairs held regularly during festivals or on auspicious days, like the full-moon day, in different villages, cities and important places of pilgrimage, because such fairs are many and they are held on a large or a small scale, according to the importance attached to the occasion in each region. At all these fairs one finds stalls where toys are on sale. There are also nation–wide as well as local celebrations of certain festivals with which toys are associated.

A general picture of some important Indian festivals in which toys play a prominent part would be of value as providing a comparison with similar festivals in other parts of the world. Such a comparison goes to show that people all over the world are dominated by more or less similar sentiments and customs. Among the festivals celebrated on a nation-wide scale in India may be mentioned Dassera, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Gokulashtami, Holi and Ramanavami. Other festivals, prevalent in certain regions only, include Gudi-padava, Nagapanchami and Thiruvonum. During the bigger festivals it is usual for parents and guardians to bring cheer into the lives of children by giving them toys as presents. Some religious cere-

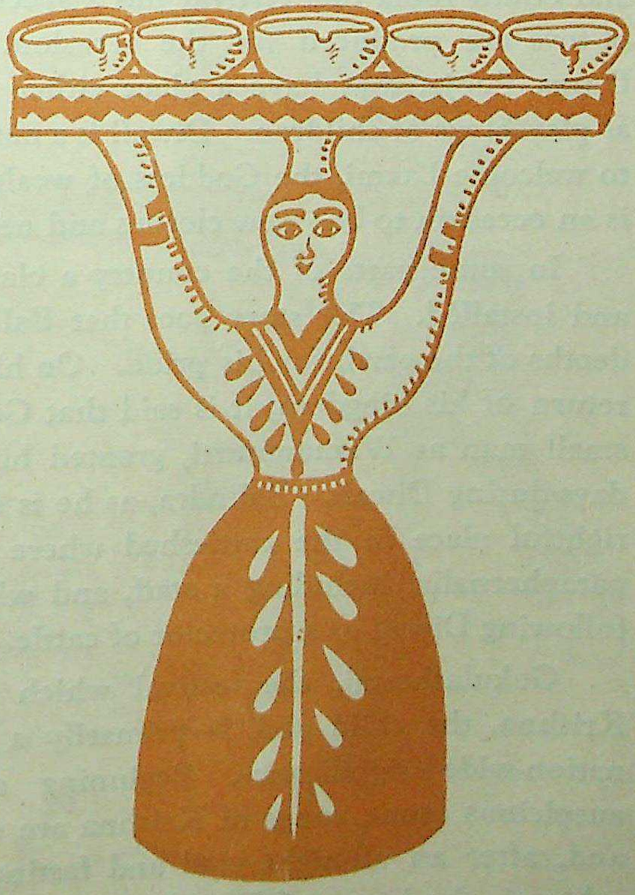

Fig. 49, Diwali lights

monies performed during these festivals have toy figures associated with them as subsidiary to images of worship. These toys serve the purpose of decoration as well. This is so, particularly, with regard to the Dassera, Diwali and Ganesh-chaturthi festivals (Figs. 49, 50).

Dassera is one of the biggest festivals. It marks the return of the Pandavas from exile. It is also an occasion to burnish the weapons of defence in one's armoury and to worship Durga, the Goddess of strength, for a period of nine days. In Bengal and South India this festival has a special appeal, and all kinds of toys are produced for the occasion. Wherever there is a Durga Pooja, toys have a place either as decorative pieces or as playthings of children. Diwali is a national festival, celebrated to welcome Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. This is an occasion to buy new clothes and new things generally.

In some parts of the country a clay image of Bali is made and installed. The story goes that Bali was banished into the depths of the earth for his pride. On his entreating God for the return of his kingdom, it is said that God, taking the form of a small man as Wamanmurti, granted him a kingdom for three days during Diwali. Balindra, as he is sometimes called, has his rightful place in the cattleshed where he is carried with his paraphernalia, including a staff, and where he remains till the following Diwali as a protector of cattle.

Gokulashtami, the festival which celebrates the birth of Krishna, the child-god, is primarily a children's festival with nation-wide significance. Beginning a week prior to the auspicious event, songs of Krishna are sung, *bhajans* conducted and, after an all-night vigil and fasting on the eve of Gokulashtami, the image of Lord Krishna is placed in a toy cradle

(Fig. 50). Cradle songs are then sung and sweets in miniature form distributed among children and even among elders. The following morning is the time for breaking earthen pots containing curds, and all children are supposed to become Govindas (Krishnas). Pots of curds containing money are hung for these Govindas and there is great excitement and a scramble for the curds. Members of the peasant class are chief among those who take part in the breaking of the earthen pots.

A special feature of the Holi and Ramnavami festivals in many parts of India is the use of masks for the amusement of

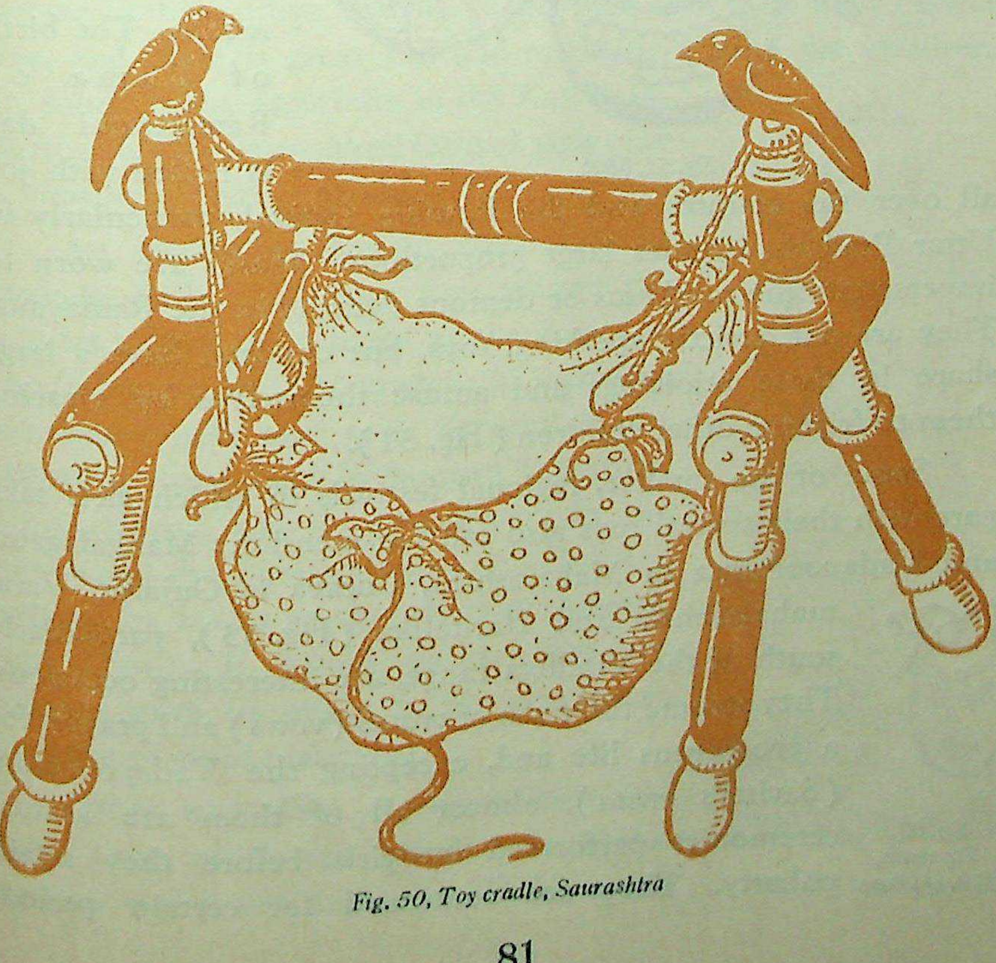

Fig. 50, Toy cradle, Saurashtra

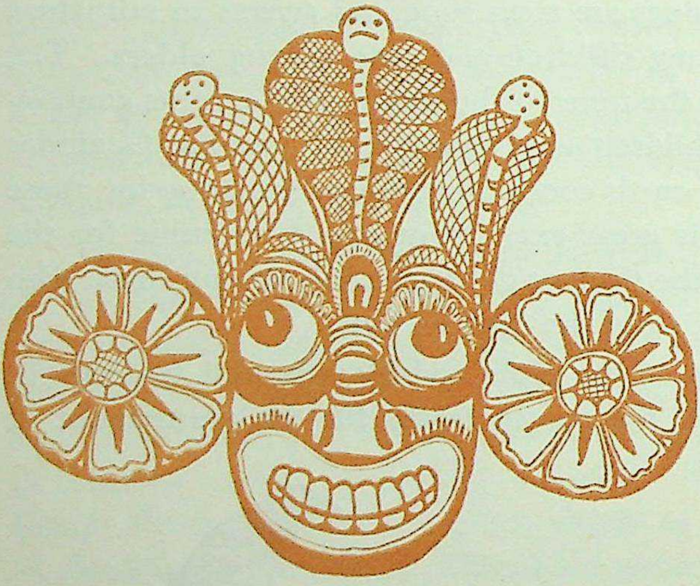

Fig. 51, Mask

children. Holi being the harvest festival, merry-making is the order of the day throughout the country, and all sorts of facetious characters figure in the entertainments. The birth of Rama on Ramnavami day is hailed with joy all over the country and the Ramlila festival, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, assumes large proportions. Masks are worn to impersonate the *rakshasas* or demons figuring in the Ramayana. They are not, strictly speaking, toys, but children have a large share in these rejoicings and amuse themselves by wearing them to frighten other children (Fig. 51).

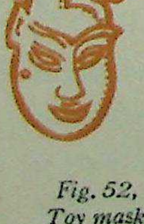

Fig. 52, Toy mask, Mohenjo-Daro

Some of the smaller, regional festivals in which girls take part with their special toys also call for mention: Mangalagauri and Vadapoornima in Maharashtra, Gorava in Gujarat, Varamahalakshmi and Haritalika (Fig. 53), particularly south of the Vindhya range, are interesting occasions. They assume the form of *vratas* (vows) and prayers for a prosperous life and, excepting the Vadapoornima (Savitri's *vrata*), almost all of them are annual ceremonies performed by girls before they attain puberty. They are continued for certain periods or permanently, even after the girl has grown up into a woman. On these occasions toys, including dolls, are laid out by way of decoration around the altar of the deity. Fasting for a period, followed by a *pooja* (religious service), indoor and outdoor games and socials make up the programmes. Two more sectional festivals associated with toys and games are the Sankrant and the Nagapanchami. For boys these festivals are occasions for flying kites and playing with tops and hoops. The boys present their sisters with dolls and sweets on Nagapanchami day. In Allahabad and east Uttar Pradesh this is known as the Gudiya festival. Girls play with their dolls on this day, and there is great fun and rejoicing among the children. In South India, especially in the Karnatak, during the Nagapanchami festival, girls play a number of indoor games.

An interesting Indian custom is to include dolls and other toys among the articles which go to make up the dowry of the Indian bride. The practice of including miniature pots and pans as part of the dowry is mentioned in Sanskrit literature. This custom has its counterpart in the Greek and the Roman custom of dolls being carried by brides to the altars of Artemis and Diana. It would appear that the custom owes its origin to the old Indian practice of child marriages.

Other auspicious occasions associated with toys, which are common in Maharashtra and South India, are Haldi-kunku

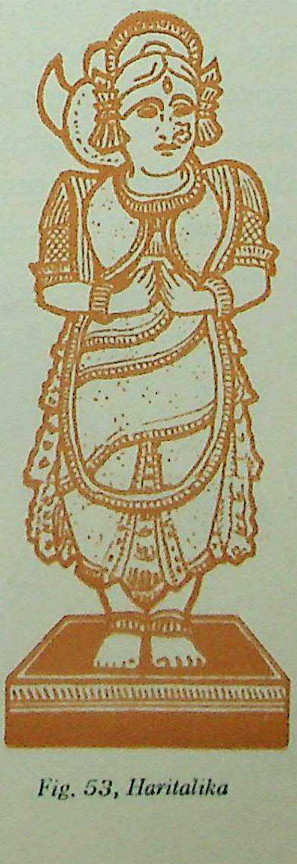

Fig. 53, Haritalika

gatherings, sacred to Hindu women. One can attend such a gathering without being invited. A small shrine is erected in one of the larger rooms of the house and decorative objects are artistically displayed around the shrine, sometimes on tiers specially erected for the purpose. Children's playthings have their place in these decorations. People who come to the gathering to partake of *haldi*, (turmeric), *kunku* (vermillion powder), flowers, sandal-paste and light refreshments take a keen interest in the decorations, and usually bring their children with them to see the objects artistically laid out. Ingenious mechanical contrivances are sometimes on view, such as miniature fountains and railway trains. Sometimes, models of mountains, rivers and natural scenery are erected. Toy animals and birds also form part of these settings. In Maharashtra, once the scene of the exploits of Shivaji, the Maratha King, and the stronghold of the Peshwas, a miniature fort is the dominating feature of the display, with the accompaniments of war, such as cannon, armoured soldiers, infantry and cavalry arranged in all their military pomp and splendour. Haldi-kunku gatherings have their counterpart in the great Dolls' Festival of Japan, although, unlike the Japanese festival, the former are organized on a much smaller scale, and may be celebrated by each family on a different day according to individual convenience.

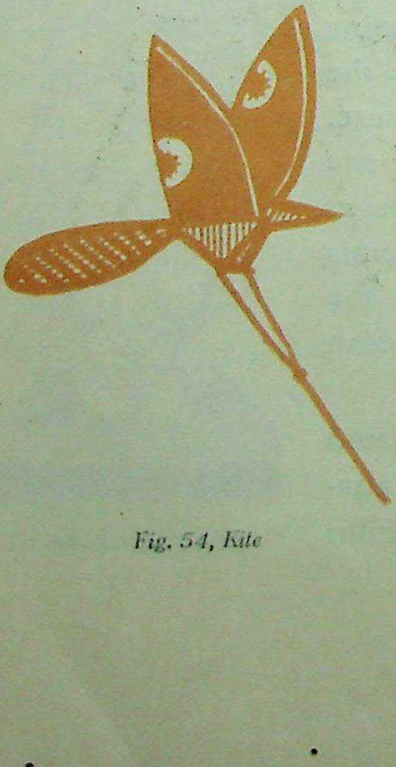
Fig. 54, Kite

There are seasonal toys, games and outdoor sports in which Indian children take interest. Among

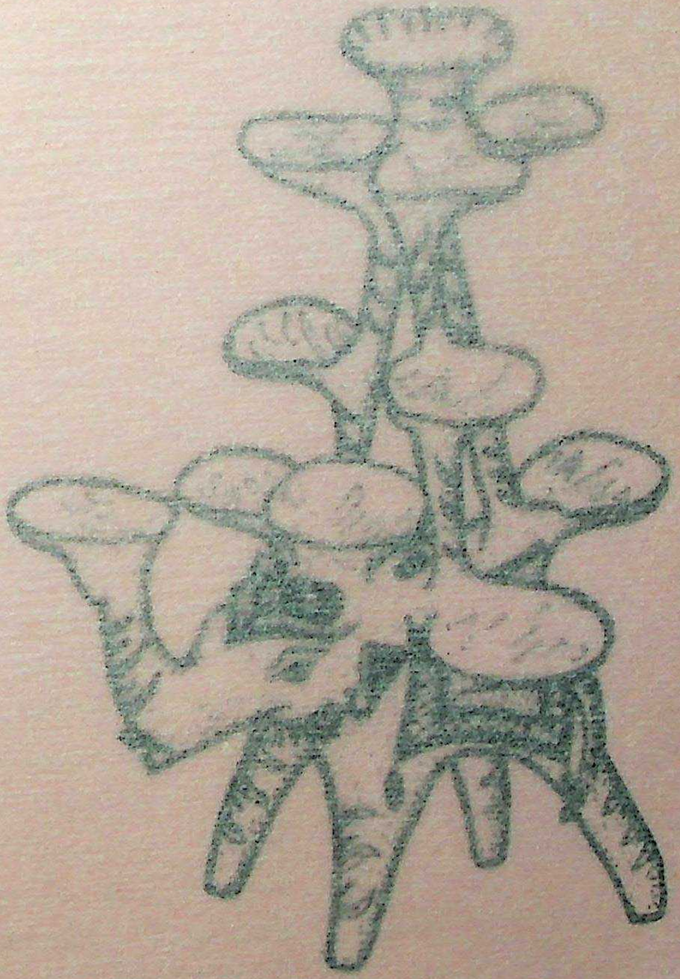

PLATE VII

DIWALI ELEPHANT

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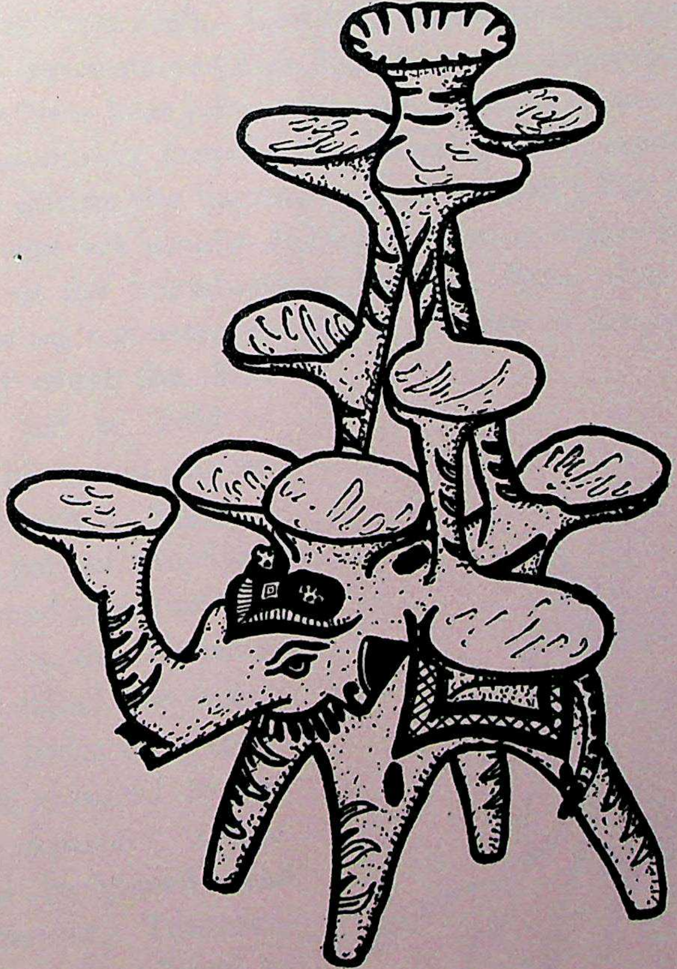

PLATE VII
DIWALI ELEPHANT

seasonal toys mention may be made of kites, crackers, toy-balloons and paper lanterns (Figs. 54 & 55). Kites, especially, are popular in the winter months when weather conditions are favourable for flying them high. Children play with tops, hoops and cheap musical instruments (Figs. 57, 58) round about Gudi-padva (the Hindu New Year) day, and with crackers, fireworks, and paper lanterns during festivals like Diwali. Toys made of sugar are popular during the harvest festival or Holi (Fig. 56). Figurines and images are usually displayed, during bigger festivals, in the rôles of the attendants of deities. Often, after the festival is over, the once consecrated image remains in the home as a decorative toy which the child is unconsciously led to hold in respect as one of his prized possessions. Festivals in which figurines form an essential part of the ritual have been mentioned in the ancient texts of India. In the Dharma-sastra[28], a festival called the raising of the banner of Indra is referred to. This festival required five or seven wooden figurines called Sakra-kumaris to be placed near the staff of the banner. Tradition clings fast and people adhere to old customs in one form or another even after the passage of centuries.

It is interesting to note some of the customs prevailing in other countries and among other races

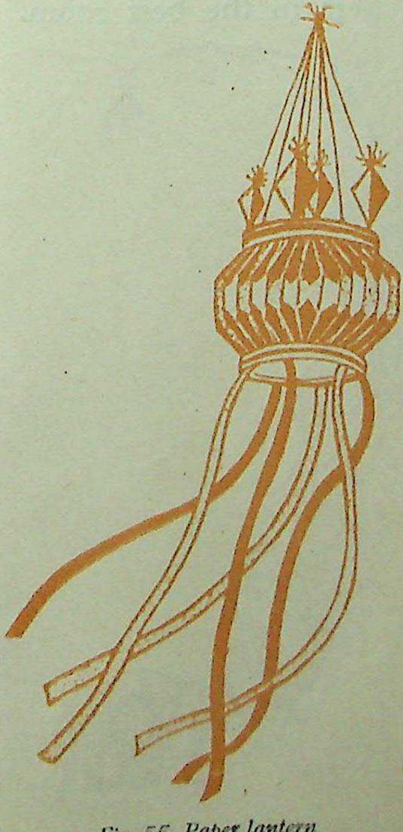

Fig. 55, Paper lantern

which disclose remarkable similarities to those described earlier in this chapter as obtaining in India. The *Hinamatsuri*, or Dolls' Festival of Japan, is a unique institution of great importance in the social life of Japan. This festival has prevailed in Japan for hundreds of years as an occasion for honouring dolls, or rather the little girls of the family. It is a festival spread over three days, starting from the third day of the third month every year, and is, in fact, looked upon as a celebration of the common birthday of all Japanese girls during the season of fruits and flowers. As at the Haldi-kunku festival in India, dolls are brought out and arranged in tiers in the best room. On the top-most shelf are seated the dolls representing the Emperor and the Empress, while other traditional and representative dolls take their allotted places on the lower shelves. All girls whose conventional birthday is thus observed are dressed for the occasion in Japan's national costume, the *kimono*. They are taught to be gentle and good, and receive presents of dolls as "symbols of protection and endowment". Tea parties are

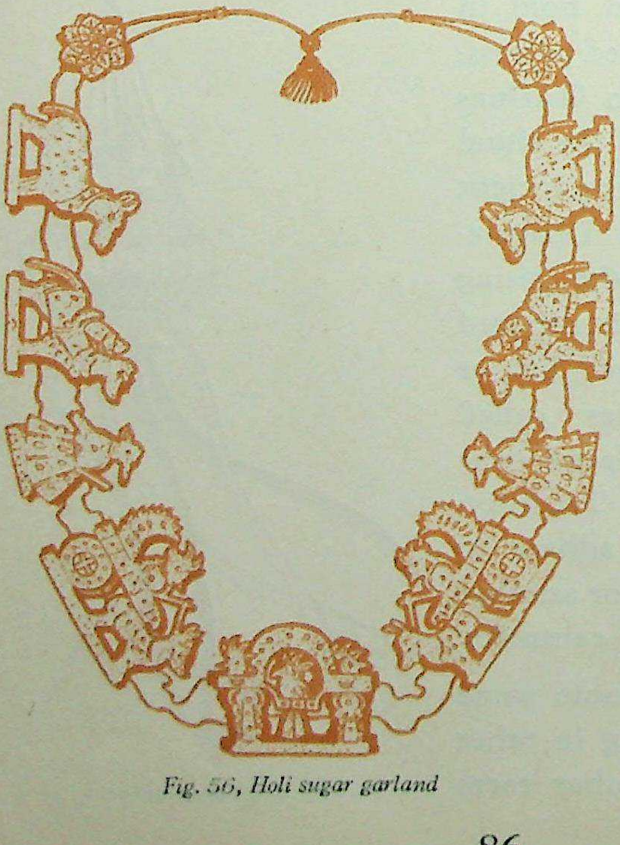

Fig. 56, Holi sugar garland

arranged during this festival, the participants including dolls, family members and guests. During this season sweets in miniature form are displayed in abundance in the shops. The epithet given to the doll is *O-Hina-Sana*, which means " Honourable Miss Doll ".[29]

Like the girls in Japan, the boys too have a special occasion in their honour. It is called *Tango-no-sekku*. At this festival a bamboo pole is planted either in the garden or on the roof of the house. To do this is regarded as the proud privilege of a family which has sons. A coloured paper carp floats from this pole. The big boy has a big fish and the younger ones have smaller fish each. The carp is supposed to be the symbol of " perseverance, courage and strength ", qualities for which the Japanese

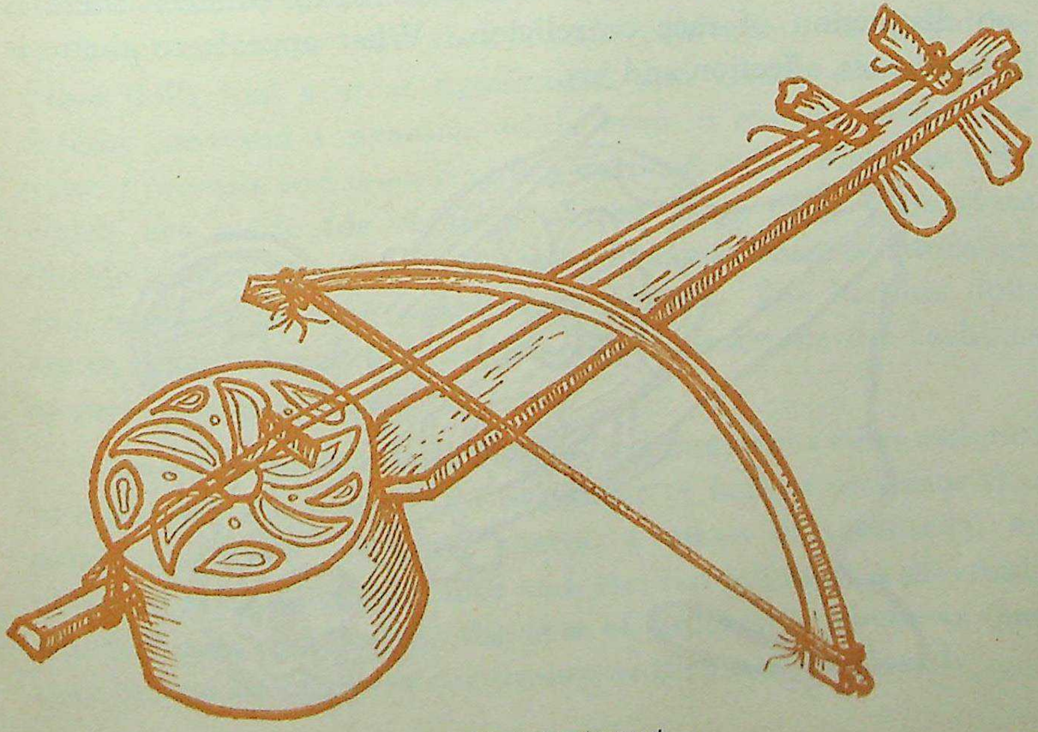

Fig. 57, Musical instrument

are well known. This festival falls on the fifth day of May every year.

The legend of Father Christmas is another institution intimately associated with toys. Children in all Christian homes look forward to the arrival of Father Christmas, loaded with presents which he is supposed to drop into the stocking hung above the child's bed. He carries a message of cheer and goodwill bringing radiance into the life of every child, rich and poor alike, and kindling abiding affection, hope and love in the heart of the child. Christmas is a great festival for all Christian children. So much sentiment is attached to Father Christmas, and so great is the enthusiasm it evokes, that the occasion stirs the deeper emotions even of non-Christian children. This only goes to show that in the world of children there is no distinction of race or religion. What appeals to them is friendliness, affection and joy.

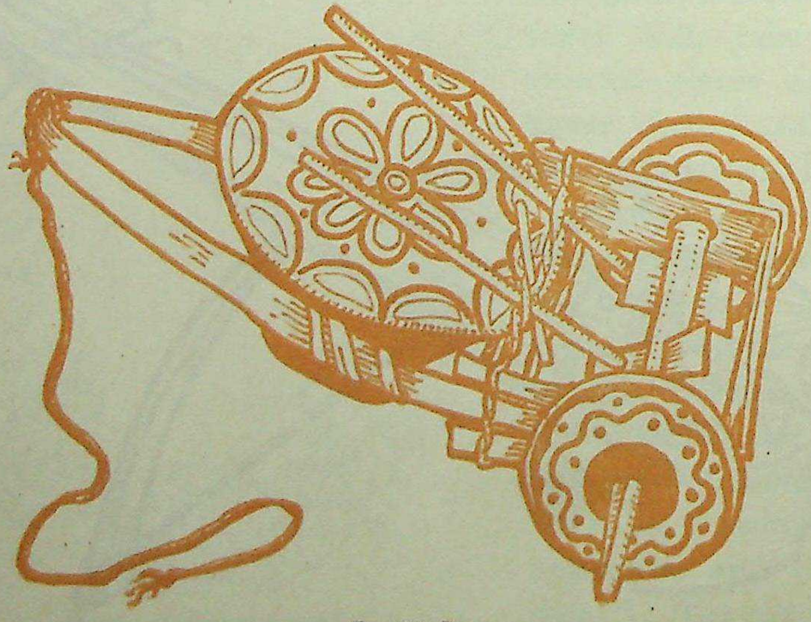

Fig. 58, Drum

There are certain other sentiments attached to toys, especially dolls, in many countries. In certain parts of England the harvest festival is an occasion when ears of corn are transformed into dolls and hung up in the houses of farmers, and allowed to remain there until new ones replace the old at the next harvest festival. The Eskimos are said to carry dolls in their *kayak*s (canoes), and the Africans do likewise, both believing that the dolls will bring them luck and prevent them from drowning. The women of some of the African tribes value the queer dolls they played with as children, and display the same kind of sentimental attachment to them that European women have for their wedding dress. They consider them as "beauty charms". The Koreans believe that a straw doll brings luck. Belgian children receive special dolls dressed in white which are believed to help them to cut their teeth painlessly. In primitive tribes dolls had a great significance, and certain colours and designs conveyed a meaning, while even in modern society the mascot prevails and is supposed to ward off evil. Kachina dolls which are made for children of the Hopi tribe (American Pueblo Indians) by their elders serve as instruments of education and religious training rather than as toys. The kachina dolls are so called because they are supposed to resemble the kachinas or supernatural beings.[30]

Among toys, therefore, the doll has numerous rôles assigned to it all over the world: as a harbinger of luck, a protector that drives away evil, a beauty charm, a token of prosperity, an object of religious significance and, last but not least, a plaything which "puts sparkle into the eyes of children", wherever they may be and in whatever circumstances they may be placed.

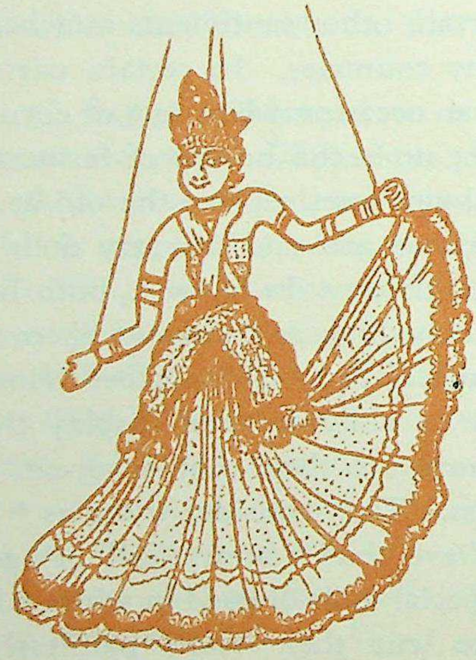

Fig. 59, Puppet, Rajasthan

CHAPTER IX

PUPPETS

PUPPETS may be regarded as a special class of toys, although, strictly speaking, they do not fall in the category of children's playthings, inasmuch as children do not handle them. They are a form of amusement organized by adults primarily for children. Puppets and puppet shows are, therefore, relevant to the theme of this book. It would be interesting to recount the history of puppets very briefly. Puppets and dolls probably existed side by side, and both appear to have been associated with ritual, magic and spirits from very early times. Puppets are known to have existed in the ancient civilization of China and, particularly, in that of Greece.

In India puppet shows date back to ancient times. Buddhist and Jain literature provide evidence of the existence of puppet shows and even contain descriptions of how they were manipulated. Mention may be made, in particular, of the Jain story, Udayasundari Katha, of the 12th century A. D.[31], which deals exhaustively with the technique of manipulating puppets. Puppet shows are known by several names, *kathaputhli* being one of them.

Sanskrit literature of the 2nd and 3rd centuries A. D. contains several references to puppets, and the art is said to have been largely developed about this time. Similes such as the following : " God is in the hearts of men and makes them move like puppets ", are to be met with in many books. In the Kama-Sutra, among the numerous *kalas* or arts and crafts, *sutakriya* (puppets) and *duhitrika* (puppet plays) are included. In our own days, the art seems to be widely prevalent throughout the country serving, as it does, to amuse both children and adults even in the remotest villages of India. It brings cheer into the quiet and humdrum life of the villager keeping him in touch with the cultural traditions of the country. Puppet shows are popular all over India, particularly in Rajasthan, in the Deccan and in South India. Each region has its own technique as well as its own name for the show.

There are three well-known techniques employed in puppet shows. The puppets may be moved by means of strings from the top or by a deft manipulation of hands or sticks from underneath the platform on which the puppet play is staged. In villages, even to this day, a long pole with wooden dolls loosely attached to one end of it so that they can be manipulated by means of strings is a common sight. (Fig. 58) The itinerant showman carries his portable show-place on his shoulder as he moves from place to place in search of a spot where he can collect a crowd of spectators. His show consists of a recital of some popular incident from the rich mythological lore of India, accompanied by a movement of the dolls which are supposed to be the actors in the story. In South India, the technique of making the puppets go through their movements by means of sticks has been carried to perfection. The countries of South-East Asia are known for their puppet shows. One need only refer to the puppet plays of Java and Bali where the technique of the puppet show is combined with that of the shadow-play.

Puppets may be of different material ranging from cloth to wood and cardboard. By skilful manipulation and artistic presentation the producers of puppet shows breathe life, as it were, into these miniature models, and work their way into the hearts of boys and girls. The subjects of puppet plays in India are borrowed from age-old legends, religious epics, folk-lore and history, and depict famous characters. They include the original dances of India. Puppets need not necessarily represent human figures, but may include mythological or fantastic characters, birds, animals or insects. Puppet plays are a popular entertainment in many Asian countries, and especially in South-East Asia where folk art manifests itself in various forms.

The art of puppetry has great potentialities, because a puppet theatre is a *replica* of the real theatre. It can be easily

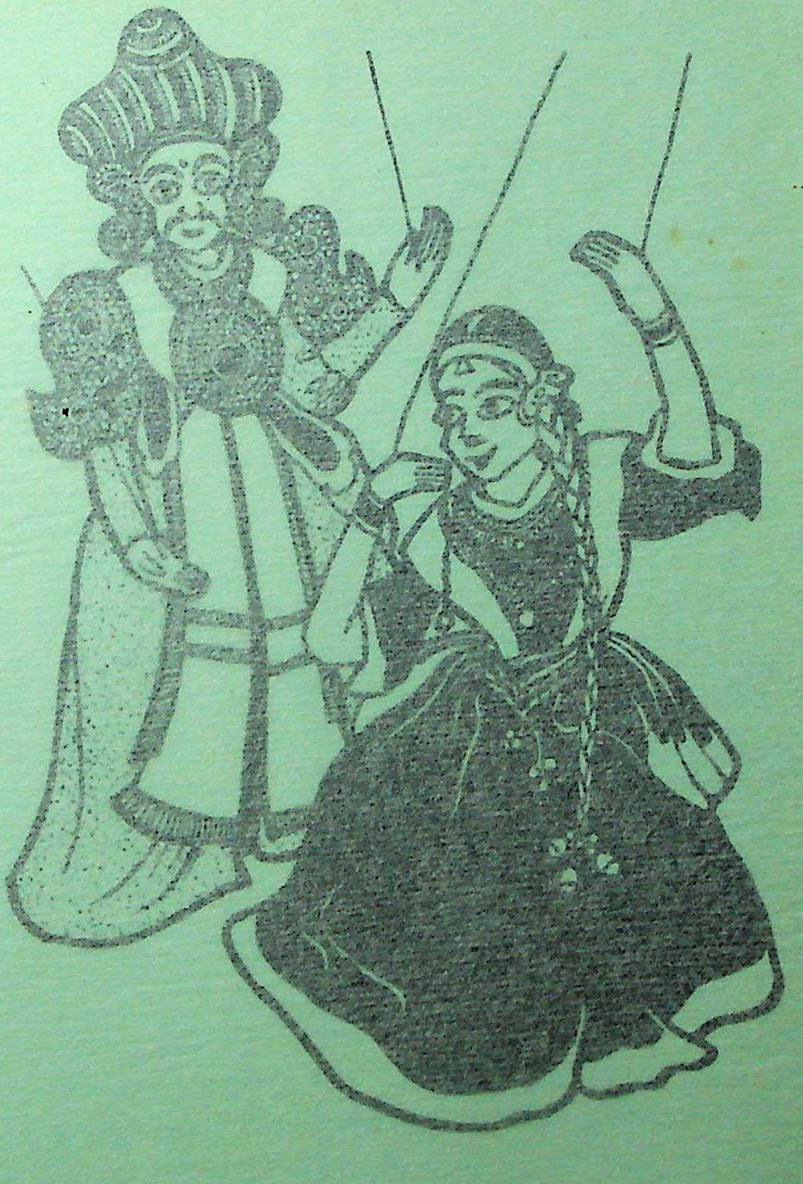

PLATE VIII
PUPPETS

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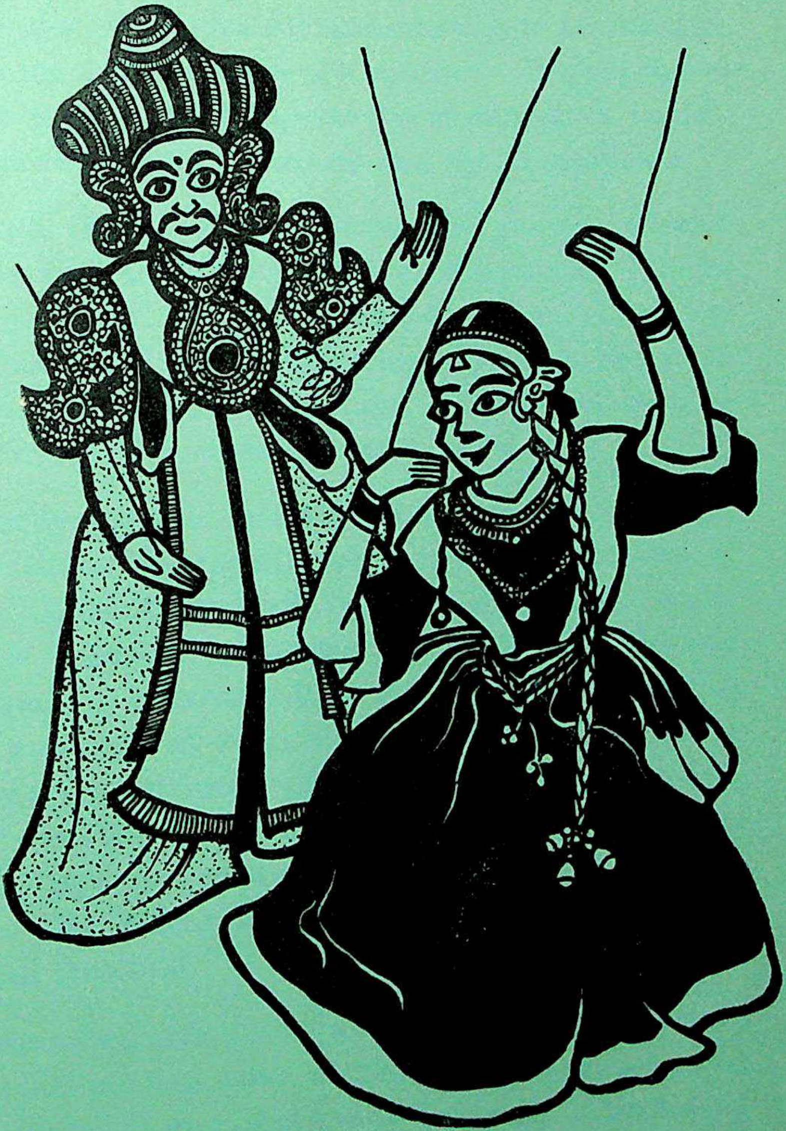

PLATE VIII
PUPPETS

developed as a popular vehicle for the transmission of knowledge, and represents the art and traditions of a country. Puppet shows could be introduced as part of popular programmes of health, recreation and education both in the city and the countryside.

In Europe and in the United States the puppet theatre occupies an important place in school programmes. Puppet clubs are encouraged and popular among children. They are economical for schools and useful for training children in handicraft work and the setting up of a stage. They also help in teaching children to work together in a team spirit.

In this class of toys should be included the pantomime plays, Punch and Judy shows, marionette plays, the toy theatres of England and the Guignol plays of France. The dolls' ballet in France today is a superb production with daintily dressed dolls whirled round by electricity in a miniature theatre with a dolls' audience complete in every detail. When such artistic productions attract the attention of even grown–up men and women, as they pass the shop windows, one can imagine the influence such theatres can have on the juvenile mind. They not only provide amusement but also help create a cultural atmosphere around the child.

The toy theatre was a great institution in England until recent times. Most houses used to have a little toy theatre attached to them. It is supposed to owe its origin to England. Cardboard sets of the scenes and characters, both plain and coloured, were available, and included scenes from operas and plays. Famous characters from literature like Don Quixote, Sancho Panza and Falstaff figured in them. It is unfortunate that they are no more to be seen.

The Punch and Judy shows, of which one could get occasional glimpses even in this country a couple of decades back, are a time-honoured institution in Europe. It is said that the Punch show first came from the Italy of the Renaissance period, and that it has descended from the dramatic scenes of ancient Greek or Italian common life, portraying characters known as the "Roman mimes". It appears that records of these shows are available for more than three and a half centuries, while the belief persists that they are over a thousand years old. Being close in many ways to the life of the humble folk, they have a mass appeal. It has been said that "Punch has become a part of British speech and thought". Phillip John Stead, a British writer, has traced the history of these shows in an interesting monograph, entitled "Mr. Punch".[32] He shows how some of the well-known characters of the living stage passed into the puppet theatre and continued to live on this miniature stage long after their death.

Punch shows are well-known in Italy, France, England, Spain, Germany, Holland, Portugal, Turkey, the Far East and the United States. Thus, puppet plays in various forms are to be found in many countries of the world both in the east and in the west. From the survey of puppet shows made by Mr. Stead it appears that puppets have contributed in their own way to the life and thought of people of particular periods. He says that the most important among them is Punch 'whose bad habits' and crude ways make him a suitable character, impish, full of elfin mischief and the embodiment of grotesque humour in human nature. The characters in Punch shows have thus found their way into literature just as characters from literature have found their way into puppet shows, and have forcefully expressed their opinion on politics in a humorous vein with an occasional dig at unpopular statesmen. The Punch shows have also been adapted to the trend of thought in each country and Punch has even changed his ways for the better. In America, he is said to have been transformed from an arrogant, impertinent and strong character into an obedient and docile individual who has come to be appreciated by even teachers and parents. A progressive evolution in the miniature and commonplace stage which serves to mould public opinion and taste is, therefore, apparent.

The art of puppetry, apart from its educational and cultural value, has another aspect which could be developed for the benefit of a large section of people who are disabled in some way. It can serve as a useful occupation for those who suffer from some handicap in their limbs or powers of speech, giving them an interesting vocation which would make their physical disabilities recede into the background and inspire them with the confidence that they, too, can become useful units among others in human society. In short, it has immense possibilities in a scheme of occupational therapy.

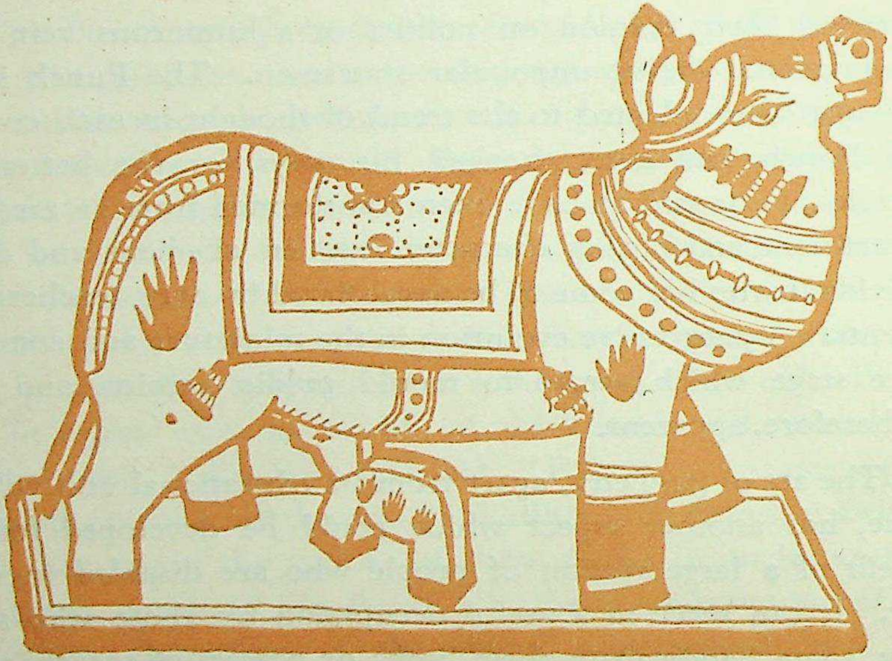

Fig. 60, Cow and calf, Banaras

CHAPTER X

AIDS

To International Understanding

THE first World War set people thinking, and was largely responsible for making them realize the necessity of bringing the nations closer together by creating a common bond of fellowship and an atmosphere in which they could co-operate and assist one another in furthering the cause of freedom and democracy. Although it is extremely doubtful whether the efforts made by the League of Nations to strengthen the ties of friendship in this manner met with success to any appreciable extent, seeing that in spite of such efforts the world became involved in a second War which was wider in its sweep and more disastrous in its consequences, there is no denying the fact that some good has been achieved.

Since the second World War, men have directed greater attention to the question of world peace, and side by side with the building up of a world organization of nations on a political and economic basis, they have set up a parallel organization to bring about world understanding on a psychological basis, through the spread of education, science and culture. This new approach to the problem of achieving a lasting world peace, being based upon a study of human psychology, lays stress on education, science and culture as unobtrusive, but powerful, forces that are more likely to succeed in bringing about understanding among men and nations through sympathy and goodwill than any political organization, however powerful, could do.

Lasting peace can only be attained by creating a new attitude in men towards life and the values of life since, as has been truly observed, "wars begin in the minds of men". The Unesco, through its various branches and activities, spread over almost all the important countries of the world, has been doing its best, through the encouragement of the study of the various national cultures and ideals, and the exchange of information about these cultures and ideals among distant countries, to stimulate "the sympathy and respect of nations for each other's ideals and aspirations".

Experts in education are agreed that a child's early years are the most impressionable years of his life, and that, "before the child enters school his mind is already profoundly marked, and often injuriously, by earlier influences". It is, therefore, believed that opportunities should be given to the child to "enlarge his imagination" and to help him develop his interests in things "remote and strange" to him. A regard for things belonging to others will counterbalance his sense of exclusive ownership of things belonging to himself. His vision will thus be widened and his mind will learn to grasp "the meaning of humanity." Dr. Herbert Read points out that a "work of art reveals the fraternal message." This being so, it is natural that emphasis should be laid on the place of art and culture in any system of education. The need of such emphasis is all the greater in the education of the child, whose mind is immature and, therefore, capable of being readily influenced by a good training, and whose emotions are easily stirred by anything that appeals to his aesthetic sense or his sense of wonder and curiosity.

The things with which the child first comes into close contact when his mind begins to grow, and which give him a glimpse of

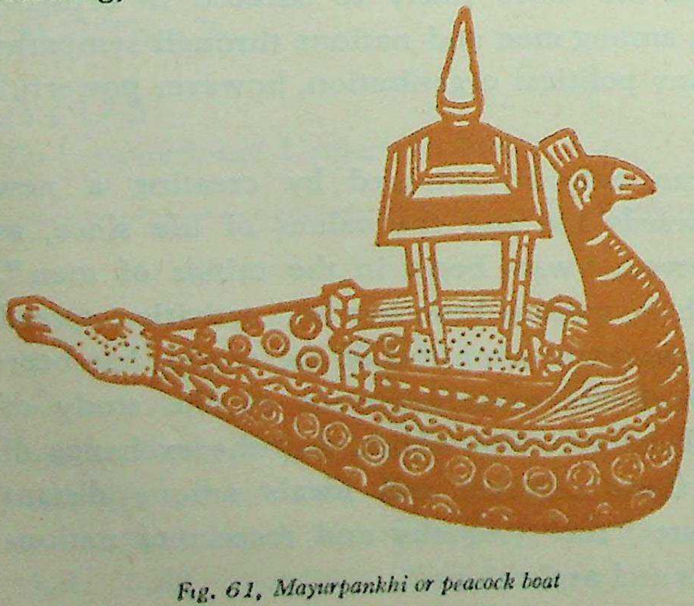

Fig. 61, Mayurpankhi or peacock boat

the larger and real world outside his nursery, are his playthings. Educationists are agreed that the home and the immediate surroundings in which he is brought up are more important for the child than the school, which is only a continuation and extension of his home so far as his training as an individual and a potential member of society is concerned. Parents, by choosing the right type of toys for their children, can do much to develop the proper attitude in them towards other members of the family, neighbours and outsiders, which will ensure in later life a broad outlook, wide sympathies, tolerance of difference in the views and ways of life of others, and a readiness to adjust themselves to social needs and responsibilities in the context of a world made up of men and women of various nationalities, races and creeds.

The truth of the saying that the child is father of the man is best illustrated by a comparison of the relationships formed in childhood with those of adult life. A child taught to regard the people of countries and races other than his own with respect, esteem and affection will naturally grow up into an adult who can fit himself easily into a scheme of world citizenship. A group of experts inquiring into the educational possibilities of children at a tender age came to the conclusion that "a child's acquaintance with (those) examples of human excellence and aspirations may kindle in him a sense of the meaning of humanity." This group suggested that a training in social geography would enable children, when they grow up, to collaborate with people of different vocations and racial traditions.

Toys are the earliest and best friends of the child, because they come closest to him in his affection after his parents. Unlike other children of the family or the neighbourhood with whom he plays, toys are incapable of showing resentment or anger, or complaining against the treatment meted out to them by the child, and yet his vivid imagination and faculty of imitation lead him to treat these inanimate companions of his play as though they were living beings into whose ears he can pour his little joys and sorrows. If a child's playthings are chosen with care, so that they impress upon his highly sensitive mind the inevitable divergencies in physical appearance, costume, customs, manners and other features associated with men and women in different parts of the world, when he grows up he will find it easy to appreciate the common humanity which underlies superficial differences in the world of living men and women belonging to different nationalities, races and civilizations. Toys which represent the inhabitants of different geographical regions with their varying modes of dress, or which give to the child an idea of the natural or manufactured products of those regions, are truly educative, inasmuch as they throw open the windows of his mind to a wider world in which races and civilizations differing from his own are visible, and at the same time lay the foundation for a better understanding of them when he will be brought into contact with them in later life.

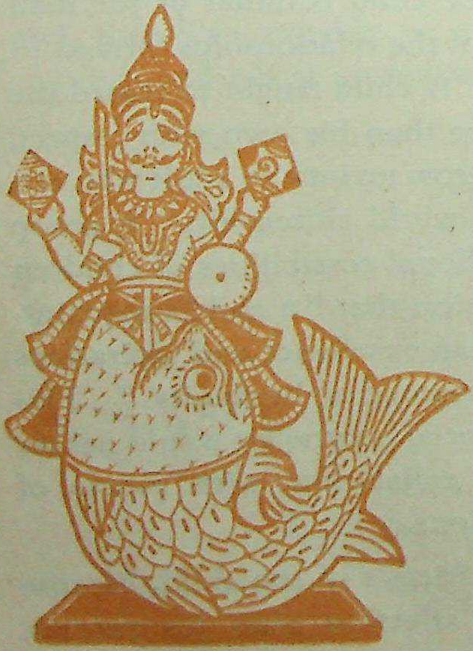

Fig. 62, Matsya Avatar

It is very necessary that parents should discourage their children from playing with what may be described as toys of an anti-social character, such as cannon, bombs, tanks, cruisers, and other implements of war, ancient and modern, which abound in the toy shops of our day. The psychological effects produced by playing with toys of this type in the innocent years of one's childhood can be tragic, indeed! It is a pity that these death-dealing modern machines have become an essential feature of modern warfare and that the banning of them is still the subject-matter of heated controversy on the floor of the U. N. O. The least one could do in the interest of the future of the human race would be to see that the child grows up without his young mind being filled with ideas of fear, cruelty and hatred. Let us not repeat the sad example, only too common during the French Revolution, of children taking a lugubrious delight in playing with toy-guillotines, and thus allow the cruelty and passions, which are still raging in the breasts of men and which culminate in wars, to be reflected in the harmless play of children. One is tempted to observe that, if there was not already a surfeit of laws, good, bad and indifferent, it might be worth while banning the manufacture and sale of toys which represent the instruments of war or cruelty as anti-social acts calling for severe penalties. Unesco which has been trying to get text-books of history re-written by purging from them accounts of historical incidents likely to arouse racial or national passions, and presenting the story of civiliza-

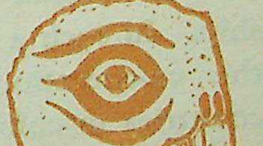

Fig. 63, Garuda

tion in a manner which will help to advance goodwill and fellowship among nations leading to international understanding, may well take up the problem of the manufacture of toys and influence manufacturers to make nothing which conveys anti-social ideas to the mind of the child either directly or indirectly. It is, however, mainly the responsibility of parents, guardians and teachers to see that children are kept out of the reach of such harmful influences in their tender years.

One way of giving effect to the idea of making toys serve the purpose of promoting international understanding would be to conduct a survey of the toys of different countries which represent their culture and tradition, and to select such of them as would assist in creating sentiments of world friendship. In such a laudable cause it should not be difficult to get the co-operation of parents and educationists in different countries to collaborate with one another in the making of such a survey, and in preparing lists of toys with their description and the place of their manufacture for being made available to parents and educational institutions.

Museums in several countries have collections of toys, both ancient and modern. Those who are responsible for looking after museums should make it a point to strengthen the toy section where one exists, and to open one if a museum does not possess it already. A museum of toys would be a very useful adjunct to a children's library, from the point of view of both recreation and instruction. Puppet theatres, which have been developed in a few countries, require to be introduced in every country which is alive to the need of bringing up its children in an atmosphere of healthy recreation and culture. They would provide a form of entertainment better suited for children below the age of twelve than the cinema theatre of our day.

An interchange of toys on festive occasions between children living in different countries would go a long way in fostering mutual goodwill and understanding among those on whom the future of the world will largely depend, for the children of today will be the citizens of tomorrow. Pen-friendships are a well-recognized means of making contacts with persons living in other parts of the world, through the writing of intimate personal letters which serve to communicate information as to the mode of life, ideas, sentiments, and that complex which may be described as the culture of a country or people, to individuals who are separated by distance and are yet interested to know and learn what is happening in regions of the world other than their own. Exchange of toys, typical of the countries which produce them, between children of about the same age living in distant

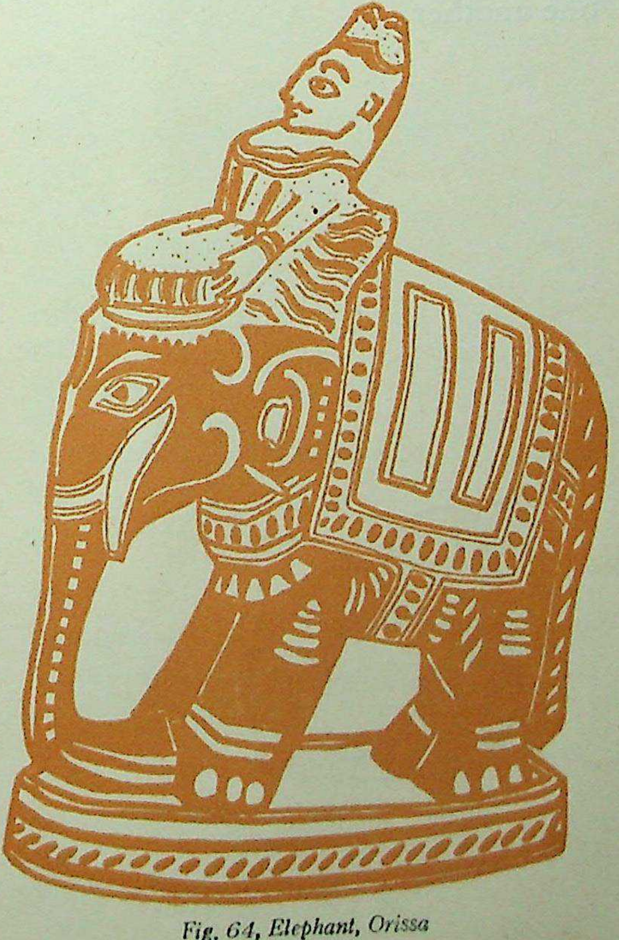

Fig. 64, Elephant, Orissa

countries, speaking different languages and following different ways of life, would not only give them the pleasure of possessing, as their own valued treasures, things which they were not accustomed to see in their own country, but which had the sentimental value attached to gifts and other tokens of goodwill. The bonds of friendship thus created between children living in different countries cannot be easily severed, and the more such bonds are created, the more difficult will it be for them, when they grow up, to harbour feelings of ill-will or hatred towards one another.

GLOSSARY

Adoliya	Tipcat game.
Akham	Ball game played by girls.
Avatar	Incarnation of God.
Bhajans	Religious songs.
Bhatukali	Children's cooking party
Bindi	Ornament for the forehead and hair.
Cela-gola	Ball made of cloth.
Chingulaka	Wheel of coconut leaf.
Citrasva	Toy horse.
Cowries	Shells.
Dashavatar	Ten incarnations of the God Vishnu.
Dindima	Drum.
Duhitrika	Puppets.
Ghatika	Stick used in games.
Ghuggu	Dove-shaped whistle.
Gopi	Milkmaid.
Gorahaga	Bullock.
Haldi	Turmeric.
Hatari	Miniature houses.
Jatka	Horse-carriage on two wheels.
Jatra	Fair.
Jouet (French)	Toy.
Kala	Art.
Kanduka	Ball.
Kanduka-nrittya	Ball game.
Kathaputhli	Wooden doll or puppet.
Kayak	Canoe of the Eskimo.
Khullaya	Shells.
Killa	Fort.
Kimono (Japanese)	Long loose Japanese robe.
Kridanaka	Toy.
Kritrima putrika	Doll.
Kukkuta	Cock.

Kunku	Vermillion powder.
Mayurpankhi	Peacock.
Mela	Fair or gathering.
O-Hina-Sana (Japanese)	Honourable Miss Doll.
Pottula	Doll.
Puranic	Belonging to the age of the Puranas or ancient sacred books of the Hindus.
Rakshasas	Demons in Hindu mythology.
Ratham	Chariot.
Sutakriya	Puppetry.
Tango-no-Sekku (Japanese)	Boys' festival.
Tanpura	Indian musical stringed instrument.
Telanga	Inhabitant of Telangana.
Tindusa	Ball.
Tipri	Cymbals.
Tonga	Horse-carriage on two wheels.
Tuig (Dutch)	Toy.
Varna chittritaha mruttika mayuraha	Painted clay peacock.
Vattaya	Tipcat game.
Vedic	Pertaining to the Vedas or ancient sacred books of the Hindus.
Vita	Tipcat game.
Vrata	Vow.

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INDEX

Acrobats, toy, 60
Adoliya, 38
Africans, 89
Agra, 75
Ahichchatra, 33, 47
Akham, 38
Alhadi, 72, 73
Allahabad, 69, 83
Amaravati, 39
America, Punch in, 95
Anau, 27
Andhra, 34, 45, 48
Archytas, 16
Arikamedu, 33
Aristotle, 16
Artemis, 83
Asia, Central, 27
Assam, 54
Austria, 22
Avatars, 48

Balancing dolls, 65
Balgovinda, 48
Bali, 80, 92
Balloons, toy, 66, 85
Balls, 3, 14, 31, 38
Banaras toys, 46, 48, 69, 75
Bangkakka, 38
Basarh, 29, 33
Beauty charms, 89
Begum, 54
Belgian children, 89
Bengal toys, 45, 50, 76, 77
Berhampore, 75
Besnagar (Madhya Pradesh), 33
Bhajans, 80
Bharat, 41
Bharatpur dolls, 46, 77
Bhatukali, 50, 61
Bihar, 77
Billiken William, 21
Bindi, 46
Biological utility theory, 56
Boora Goonda, 54
Brahmagiri excavations, 33, 34
Brahmajalsutta, 38
Brahmapuri (Kolhapur), 34, 36
Bride, anointing of the, 50
British Museum, 15
Bronze Age, 28
Buddha, 39
Buddhist literature, 91
Buddhist period, 54
Burma, 65
Buxar (Bihar), 33

Calcutta, 75
Camel, 60
Cappadocia, 27
Cela-gola, 38
Centres of toy industry, 75
Champaran, 33
Chandravalli, 33, 34
Chanho-Daro, 32, 36
Channapatna, 74
Character dolls, 54
Child-god, 48
China, 28, 30, 65, 72, 91
Chingulaka, 38
Christmas, 69, 88
Citrasva, 38
Clowns, 60

Cock, 38
Coloured toys, 59
Construction sets, 66
Cooking party, 50, 61
Cotton toys, 70
Cowries, 38
Crackers, 85
Cradle songs, 81
Crusades, 17, 20
Cuddly toys, 54
Cult objects, 26
Cultural importance of Indian toys, 44

Dashakumara Charitra, 40
Dashavatar, 48
Dassera, 79, 80
Deccan College Post-graduate & Research Institute, 34
Deccan puppets, 91
Demons, 82
Destruction, models of, 66
Dharmasastra, 85
Diana, 17, 83
Diggha Nikaya, 38, 39
Dindima, 38
Diwali, 79, 80, 85
Dnyaneswar, 48
Dolls,
  Balancing, 65
  Ballet, 93
  Bermuda, 7
  Brazil, 7
  Character, 54
  Chile, 7
  Costume, 18, 19
  Egypt, 15
  Flying, 42
  Greek, 16
  Houses, 5, 21
  Hungarian, 7
  Kachina, 89
  Mascots, 3
  Materials for, 7
  Messengers, as, 5, 18
  Mexican, 7
  Peruvian, 7
  Queen Victoria's, 20
  Roman, 17
  Roles of, 89
  Wedding, 49, 50
Dolls' Festival, 84, 86
Domesticated animals, 73
Don Quixote, 93
Dreppard, Carl W, 22
Duhitrika, 40, 91
Durga Pooja, 80

East India Company, 46-47
Educational value of toys, 55
Egypt,
  Antiquities of, 3
  Child of, 15
  Civilization of, 3
  Collection of toys of, 15
  Dolls of, 15
  Excavated sites in, 27
  Marbles in, 28
Engineering, progress in, 66
England, Punch shows in, 94
Eskimo, 89
Evans, Sir Arthur, 27
Excavated sites, toys from, 24-36
Exchange of toys, 103

Factory-produced toys, 65, 69, 70
Fairs, 69, 79
Falstaff, 93
Father Christmas, 88
Festivals, 78, 79, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88
Field, Eugene, 21

Figurines, 17, 25, 26
Flanders' babies, 5, 20
Folk art, 8-9
Foreign influence, 77
French
  Court, 18
  Dolls' 18, 46
  Dolls' ballet, 93
  Punch shows, 94
  Revolution, 4, 19, 101
  Toys, 18, 19

Games, 84, 85
Ganesh Chaturthi, 79, 80
Gangavati, 46, 53
Gargantua, 18
Garuda, 101
Gaya, 69
Germany,
  Punch shows in, 94
  Toy industry in, 8, 22
Ghatika, 38
Ghuggu, 31
Gokak, 74, 75
Gokulashtami, 79, 80
Gorahaga, 38
Gorava, 82
Goverdhan, 63
Govindas, 81
Graeco-Roman ware, 36
Great Bath, 26
Great Exhibition, 22
Groos, Karl, 55
Gudi-Padva, 79, 85
Gudiya festival, 83
Guignol plays, 93
Guillotines, 4, 19
Gujarat, toys of, 50, 82
Gupta period, 33, 54
Gustavus Adolphus, 19

Haldi-kunku, 83, 86
Hall, Stanley, 56
Han period, 28
Handmade toys, 6, 8, 50-51, 56, 69-71, 72, 76, 77
Hanuman, 64
Harappa, 25, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 57, 71
Haritalika, 82, 83
Harsha, 39
Hatari, 40
Hinamatsuri, 86
Hindu pantheon, 6, 35
Hobby horses, 66
Holi, 79, 81, 85
Holland,
  Punch shows in, 94
  Toys of, 5, 20
Hoops, 17, 19, 66, 85
Hopi tribe, 89
Howdahs, 75
Hyderabad (Deccan), 74

Images of worship, 45
India,
  Centres of toy industry in, 75
  Handmade toys of, 10
  Legendary lore of, 6
  Lever action toys, 65
  Past history of, 54
  Rubber, 22
  South, 73
  Trade relations of, 35, 36
Indian market,
  Toys in the, 68-77
Indigenous toys, 64
Indus Valley Civilization, 3, 13, 14, 25, 26

Interchange of toys, 103
International understanding,
  aids to, 96-104
Isobel, Princess, 18

Jain literature, 38, 91
Japan,
  Dolls' festival, 84, 86
  Toy industry of, 8
Japanese festivals, 84, 86, 87, 88
Jatkas, 73
Jatras, 69
Java, 92
Jouet, 18
Jugglers, toy, 60

Kachina dolls, 89
Kalas, 40, 91
Kalichandika, 46
Kalidasa, 40
Kalighat, 47
Kalimoyee, 50
Kalingsena, 42
Kamasutra, 40, 91
Kanduka, 40, 41
Karnatak, 83
Kathaputhli, 91
Kathasaritsagar, 41, 42
Kathiawar toys, 50
Kayaks, 89
Khullaya, 38
Killa, 47
Kimono, 86
King, Beatrice, 66
Kish, 27
Kites, 85
Knights, 17
Kolhapur, 34
Kondapalli, 48, 75
Koreans, 89
Kosam, 33, 36
Kridanaka, 38
Krishna, 48, 50, 63, 80, 81
Krishnagar, 74, 75
Kritrimaputrika, 41
Kukutta, 38
Kumarasambhava, 41
Kunku, 84
Kurgan, South, 28

Languages, modern Indian, 53
Laufer, B, 29
Laxman, 63
League of Nations, 97
Letitia Penn, 21
Little Boy Blue, 21

Madhya Bharat toys, 50, 74, 76, 77
Madhya Pradesh, 33
Madras, 74, 75, 77
Madurai, 69
Magicians, toy, 60
Mahabharata, 38, 63
Maharashtra, 47, 82, 83, 84
Maharashtra, dolls of, 45
Majjhima Nikaya, 39
Mandakini, 41
Mandarin, 72
Mangalagauri, 82
Manipur, 75
Manisha Devi, 50
Maratha
  King, 84
  Period, 54
Marguerite, Princess, 18
Marionette plays, 93
Market, toys in the Indian, 68-77
Marshall, Sir John, 27

Index

Mascots, 3, 50
Marwar, 48
Masks, 82
Mathura, 33, 48, 69, 75
Matsya Avatar, 100
Mayura, 38
Mayurpankhi, 47, 98
Melas, 69
Metal toys, 70
Middle Ages, 17, 20
Milinda Panho, 38
Mirabai, 48
Mobile toys, 14, 15
Mohenjo-Daro
  Children, 31
  Civilization, 13, 14, 25, 26
  Dice, 28
  Figurines, 44, 45
  Marbles, 28
  Toys, 13, 14, 25, 32, 33, 47, 57, 71, 72
Mongolian features, 45
Montgolfier brothers, 66
Mrichhakatika, 36, 41
Mruttika Mayuraha, 41
Mummies, 3, 15, 17
Murshidabad, 75
Museum,
  British, 15, 27
  Cluny, 18
  Utrecht, Central, 21
Museums, 102
Musical instruments, 85
Musicians, toy, 61
Muzaffarpur, 29
Muzumdar, N. G., 30
Mysore, 34

Nagapanchami, 79, 83
Nagarjunakonda, 39
Narada, 38
Naravahanaduta, 42
Nasik, 69, 75
Netherlands, 20
New England, 21
New Year, Hindu, 85
New World, 21
Nile Valley Civilization, 14
Nuremburg, 21
Nursery, 54

Occupational therapy, 95
O-Hina-Sana, 87
Orissa, 75, 77
Owl, 50

Palaikaestro, 27
Pandavas, 80
Paper Lanterns, 85
Papier-maché toys, 59, 70, 76
Parvati, 40
Pen-friendships, 103
Pennsylvania, 21
Peshwas, 84
Philosophical apparatus, 22
Picture-books, 54
Pilgrimage, centres of, 69
Pith toys, 70
Plaques, 17
Play instinct, 1-2
Pondicherry, 33
Pooja, 83
Portugal, Punch shows in, 94
Pottula, 38
Pueblo Indians, 89
Punch, 94, 95
Punch and Judy, 93, 94
Punjab, 29
Puppets, 90-95
Puppet theatres, 102-3
Puranic lore, 62, 63

Puri, 69
Putrika, 40

Rabelais, 18
Rahula, 39
Rajasthan, 33, 46, 73, 76, 77, 78, 91
Rajghat, 33, 47
Rajshahi excavations, 33
Rajyadhara, 42
Railway junctions, 70
Rakshasas, 82
Rama, 63, 82
Ramanavami, 79, 81, 82
Ramayana, 63
Rameshwar, 69
Ramlila, 82
Rangmati, 33
Ratham, 38
Rattles, 3, 14, 31, 57, 58
Raw materials, 70, 76
Recapitulation theory, 56
Read, Herbert, 98
Renaissance, 94
Roman
  Mimes, 94
  Influence, 35
  Custom, 83
  Toys, 17
Ross James, 56

Saints, images of, 48
Sakra-kumaris, 85
Sancho Panza, 93
Sankisa, 33
Sankrant, 83
Sarnath, 36
Satavahana period, 34
Satyavan, 38
Saurashtra, 81
Savantwadi, 74, 75
Savitri, 82
Scooters, 66
Sect marks, 49
Seligman, Professor, 29
Shakuntala, 41
Shell toys, 70
Shikaras, 73
Shiva, 38
Shivaji, 47, 84
Shudraka, 41
Sind, 28
Small-scale industries, 77
Smith, Sydney, 27
Soapstone toys, 70
Sources,,
  Literary, 37-43
  Sculptural, 37-43
South-East Asia, 92
South India, 91 92
Sports, 84, 85
Stead, Phillip John, 94
Story books,
  Children's, 6, 64
  Picture, 6
Straw toys, 70
Sumer, 27
Sumerian wheel, 27
Sutakriya, 40, 91
Suvrata, 41
Suyagadan, 38
Sweden, King Gustavus Adolphus, of, 19
Switzerland, 5-6, 23

Tales of mystery, 62
Tango-no-sekku, 87
Tanjore, 65
Tanpura, 48
Teddy bear, 54

Telanga figures, 47
Temple-squares, 69
Terra cottas, 13, 14, 16, 17, 25, 33, 42, 71, 72
Thakki, 46
Theatres, toy, 5, 20, 93
Thiruvonum, 79
Tindusa, 38
Tipcat game, 38
Tipri, 48
Tirucharapalli, 74, 75
Tirupathi, 69
Tongas, 73
Tops, 85
Toy
  Acrobats, 60
  Aeroplanes, 66
  Animals, 14, 15, 32, 58, 59, 84
  Armoured Cars, 4, 19
  Balloons, 4, 5
  Baskets, 31
  Battleships, 4, 19, 66
  Birds, 32, 58, 84
  Bird-Cages 31
  Bombers, 4, 19, 66
  Bridges, 66
  Cannon, 4, 19
  Cart, 14
  Chariots, 73
  Clowns, 60
  Cracker, 4
  Cranes, 66
  Cruisers, 66
  Cuddly, 54
  Garden implements, 62
  Gods and Goddesses, 6, 26
  Guillotines, 4, 19, 101
  Gun-Carriages, 66
  Heaters, 31
  Horse, 39
  Insects, 32
  Jugglers, 60
  Magicians, 60
  Musicians, 61
  Saddle-querns, 31
  Sieves, 31
  Soldiers, 4
  Submarines, 4, 19, 66
  Tanks, 4, 19, 66
  Theatres, 5, 20, 93
  Trains, 66
  Torpedoes, 66
  Utensils, 31, 60, 61, 63
  Vehicles, 60
  Windmills, 18
Toy-makers, 71
Toy-making, revolution in, 8
Toys,
  As mascots, 3
  Collections of, 10-11, 15, 19, 20, 21
  Coloured, 58
  Decorative, 10
  Factory-produced, 8
  Folk-art, contribution to, 8-9
  Functions of, 56, 57
  Greek, 16
  Handmade, 6, 8, 10
  History of, 3
  Holland, of, 5
  Indigenous, 64
  Indus Valley Civilization, in, 3
  Interchange of, 103
  Lever action, 65
  Materials used for, 8, 17, 31
  Mechanical, 4, 5, 8, 16, 17, 41, 42, 65
  Mobile, 14
  Modern, 50

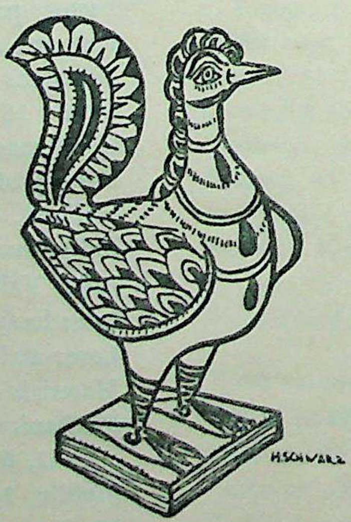
  Origin of, 1
  Pneumatic, 42
  Purpose of Indian, 11
  Roman, 17
  Terra Cotta, 13, 14, 16, 17, 25, 33, 42, 71, 72
  Vocational Groups, 60
Travancore, 75
Tricycles, 66
Tukaram, 48
Turkestan, 27
Turkey, Punch shows in, 94

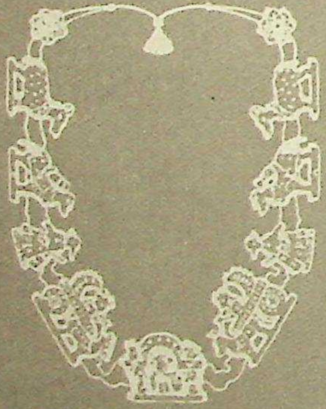
Udayasundari Katha, 91
Unesco, 97, 101
United States
  Puppets in, 93
  Toy industry in, 8, 21, 22
U.N.O. 101
Upodghitapada, 38
Uppsala, 19
Uttar Pradesh, 33, 76, 77, 82. 83

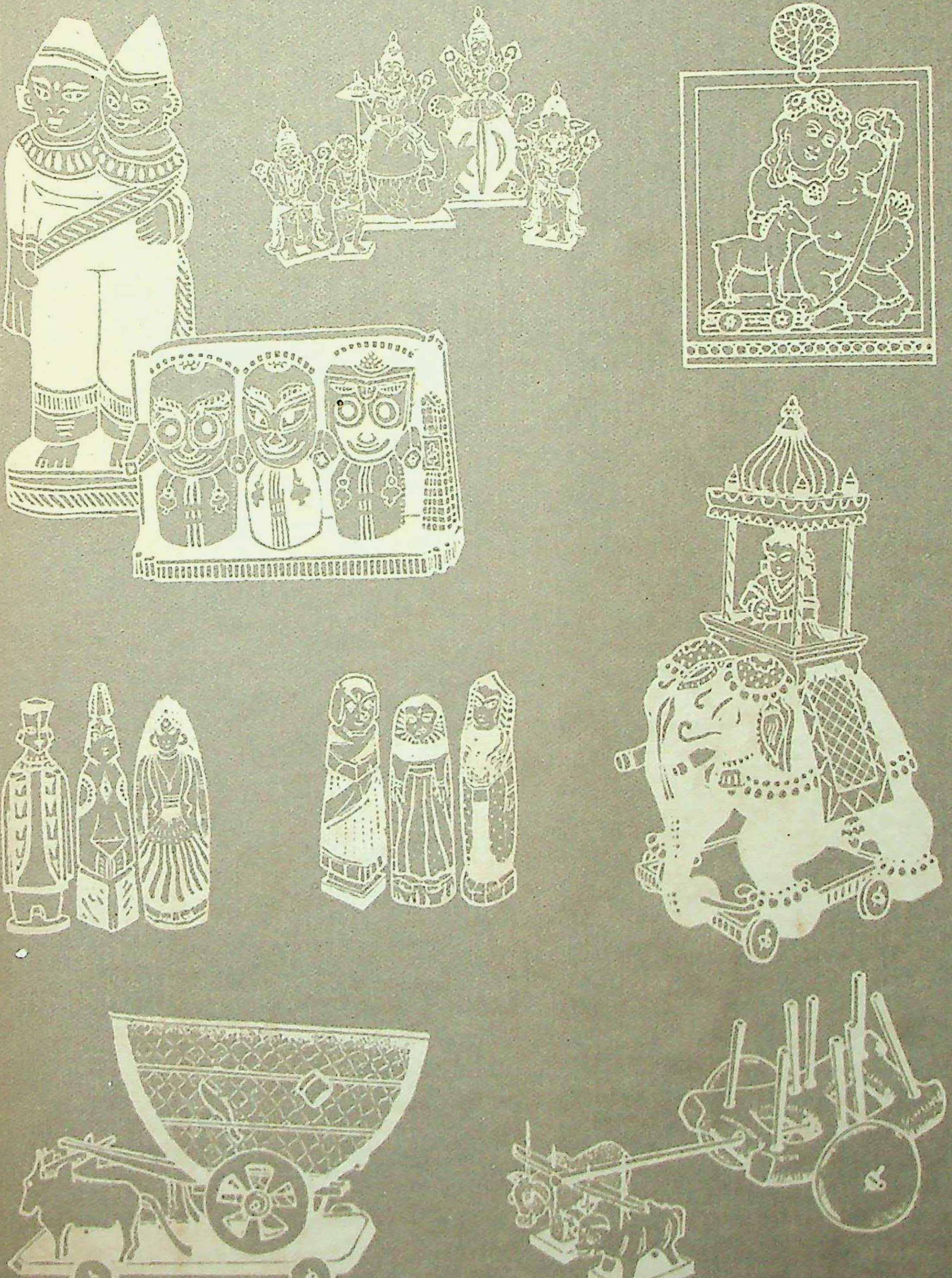
Vadapoornima, 82
Varahapurana, 38
Vattaya, 38
Vedic literature, 38
Victoria, Queen, 20
Vijayawada, 75
Vindhyas, 33, 82
Vishnu, incarnations of, 48
Vita, 38
Vitruvius, 17
Vrata, 82

Wamanmurti, 80
Wheeled birds, 28, 29, 30
Wheels, toys on, 59
Whistles, 3, 14, 31
Winchendon, 21
Windmills, 18
Winken, Blinken and Nod, 21
Wooden toys, 70, 74
World Wars, 8, 21, 96, 97

Zagorsk, 66







WHAT is important in the toy is the idea behind it, which exerts a powerful influence on the child whose imagination identifies the toy with his own existence....

THE toys of India represent in miniature the various aspects of Indian Life and foster the intellectual & emotional development of the child without conscious effort....